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Illustrations of scripture

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PLAIN OF THE JORDAN, LOOKING TOWARDS THE DEAD SEA.

WILLIAM OLIPHANT AND SON, EDINBURGH, 1841.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

I.

Encampment on the Banks of the Orontes.

WILLIAM OLIPHANT AND SON, EDINBURGH. 1841.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE,

FROM THE

GEOGRAPHY, NATURAL HISTORY, AND MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE EAST.

BY THE LATE

PROFESSOR GEORGE PAXTON, D.D.,

OF EDINBURGH.

THIRD EDITION,

REVISED AND GREATLY ENLARGED BY THE

REV. ROBERT JAMIESON,

MINISTER OF CURRIE, AUTHOR OF 'EASTERN MANNERS ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES,' ETC.

VOL. I.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

AMONG those of our countrymen who have directed their studies to the illustration of the Scriptures, from the physical and moral condition of Palestine and other oriental countries, the name of PAXTON holds a most respectable place,—indeed, is entitled to rank alongside of HARMER, BURDER, HORNE, and other successful cultivators of this department in the extensive field of Theology. His 'Illustrations of Scripture' supplied a blank which had long been felt by the lovers of sacred literature, and still continue to occupy, in some respects, without a rival to divide, the ground it so worthily took up. For while, in point of industry and patient research into the latest and most approved sources of information, and in the skill and judgment displayed in the arrangement of his materials, his volumes are acknowledged to be equal in merit to those of the most learned and accomplished of his fellow labourers, they are distinguished at the same time by this peculiar excellence,—that their author has spread over his pages, both the knowledge that will guide to the proper understanding, and the sanctified influence that will infuse the spirit,

of the Scriptures,—that he unites with the severe accuracy of the critic, the warmth and impressiveness of the christian minister, and scarcely, if ever, touches upon a single branch of his subject, without founding upon it some evangelical reflection, connected with faith or practice. The work thus contains, from the structure of its composition, the elements of an extensive popularity, and may be said to hold the same place among publications of this kind, that the well known Lectures of DWIGHT do among systematic treatises in Theology.

It is this essentially popular character of the work, that has suggested the propriety of issuing it in a cheap and small form; and the publishers flatter themselves, that, in thus bringing it within the reach of general readers, they are conferring a great boon upon the christian public. A very little reflection will suffice to show the great importance, towards the intelligent and profitable reading of the Scriptures, of possessing some knowledge of the physical and moral circumstances of the country in which they were produced. The language and general structure of the Sacred Volume were wisely accommodated to the prevailing habits of thinking, speaking, and acting of the people to whom they were first communicated; and hence, as the sacred penmen, though writing under the suggestion and control of Divine influence, were left to clothe their ideas in the characteristic garb of their age and country, the inspired volume eminently bears throughout the

stamp of its eastern origin. A book, then, whose object is to give illustrations of these peculiarities of the Word of God, cannot be regarded without deep interest; and few of this description are fitted to be more useful and acceptable to all classes of students of the Bible than the work of Dr PAXTON, which combines, in so eminent a degree, the qualities of solid learning and fervent piety.

For reasons, which it is unnecessary to state, it has been thought desirable, in bringing out the new issue, to commence with the Manners and Customs, which will occupy the first two volumes; the Natural History will be comprised in the third; and the Geography in the fourth. But, though this arrangement has been adopted for the convenience of the publishers, it will be found a matter of no moment as affecting the character of the publication, as the series, when completed, can be read in the order originally chosen by Professor PAXTON. The volume on Geography will be preceded by a Memoir of Dr PAXTON, by the Rev. Dr MITCHELL of Glasgow, as well as by the general Prefaces, both of the Author and the Editor. In the meantime, it may be sufficient to state, that the new matter introduced into the work is distinguished in the text by brackets, and in the notes by the word 'Editor.'

The Publishers take this opportunity of acknowledging their obligations to Messrs FISHER, SON, AND CO. of London, for the handsome manner in which they granted the use of the Designs drawn

from nature by distinguished artists, for their admirable work entitled 'Syria and the Holy Land,' from which the Frontispieces and Vignettes accompanying these volumes have been reduced.

CURRIE MANSE, *October* 1841.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE FROM THE PASTORAL LIFE OF THE ORIENTALS.

Antiquity and prevalence of Shepherd life. Its independence. Sons and daughters of Shiechs employed as shepherds. Flocks immensely numerous. Description of flocks on march. Chief Shepherd. Good and bad shepherds. Migratory habits. Marking sheep. Accountable for flocks. Watching at night. Great care and vigilance. Providing retreats during heat of the day. Carrying lambs in their arms. Dress. Implements. Strife. Wells. Presents of cattle. Labours and dangers. Tracing footsteps. Sheep following shepherd. Music. Habitations of shepherds. Tents. Their form, colour, and furniture. Sheep-folds. Shearing. Dairy produce. Trade. Alliances with neighbouring tribes. Hospitality. Staple articles of food. Hunting. Prejudices of the Egyptians, - - - - - - P. 9–111

CHAPTER II

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE FROM THE STATE OF AGRICULTURE IN THE EAST.

Its origin and progress. Fruitfulness of India. Implements. Sowing. Various obstacles to vegetation. Rate of increase. Burning grass. Harvest. Thrashing. Winnowing instruments. Granaries. Rapid growth of verdure. Hay. Gardens, their form, different kinds, and produce. Vineyards. Grapes. Olive-yards. Tower. Parties of pleasure in gardens, - - P. 112–197

CHAPTER III.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE FROM THE HOUSES, CITIES, WALLS, AND TOWERS OF THE EAST.

Houses of clay. Digging through. Destroyed by floods. Frailty. Effects of rain. Magnificent buildings. Style of building. Corner stone. Small gates. Windows. Divans. Beds. Staircase.

Flat-roofs. Apartment for strangers. Temple of Dagon. Ventilating rooms. Lights. Nails. Brazier. Lofty walls of cities. Locks and keys. Watchmen. Tower at gates. Winter and summer house. Gate for kings. Palace-gate. City gate a public rendezvous. Outskirts of cities, - - - - P. 198–278

CHAPTER IV.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE FROM THE DRESS OF THE ORIENTALS.

General remarks. Many-coloured garments. Wide and flowing. Difference in dress of sexes. Hykes. Fibula. Turban. Burmose. Girdle. Mantle. Shoes. Washing feet. Haircloth. Sackcloth. Gorgeous cloaks. Dress of ladies and gentlemen. Immense wardrobes. Beards. Moths. Sitting on the bare ground. Prophet's mantle. Ornaments of officers of state. Regalia. Public exhibitions of royalty. Metaphorical allusions to dress, P. 279–358

CHAPTER V.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE FROM THE MEALS AND ENTERTAINMENTS OF THE ORIENTALS.

Times of eating. Barley-bread. Hand-mills. Millstones. Female employment. Baking-ovens. Parched corn. Fuel. Fatlings. Honey. Cup of water to travellers. Wines. Invitations. Perfuming guests. Form of the table. Uppermost seats. Attentions to guests. Particular honours. Right to a seat at royal table. Governor of feasts. Feasts in the open air. Dipping hands in a dish. Manner of drinking. Dancing. Men and women do not eat together. Feasts to the poor, P. 359–439

CHAPTER VI.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE FROM THE MARRIAGE CEREMONIES OF THE EAST.

Marriage reckoned honourable by the Jews. Early marriages. Polygamy unlawful. Ardent affection to mothers. Marriage contracts. Companions of the bridegroom. Benediction at marriage. Lamps at marriage procession. Marriage feasts. Privacy of the harem. Close confinement of women. Treatment of infancy. Joy at the birth of a son. Grief at the birth of a daughter. Giving of names. Nurses. Companions to boys. Treatment of illegitimate children. Adoption, - - - - - P. 440-476

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE.

CHAPTER I.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE FROM THE PASTORAL LIFE OF THE ORIENTALS.

THE first man was no sooner expelled from the garden of Eden for his breach of covenant, and doomed to earn his bread with the sweat of his brow, than he attempted to reduce the more useful animals under his yoke; and with so much success, that the sacred historian marks it as the proper employment of Abel, his younger son, that he 'was a keeper of sheep.' But it is in Jabal, a son of Cain, that we find the first example of an oriental shepherd: 'he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle.'* No farther notice is taken of antediluvian shepherds, in the rapid narrative of Moses; but it is reasonable to suppose, that the descendants of Jabal continued, according to the manners of the East, to follow the employment of their father, till the deluge swept them all away. Noah, it is probable, was devoted to husbandry from his earliest years; for Moses observes, that immediately after the deluge, he 'began to be an husbandman;'† he resumed his labours in the field, which had been interrupted by that dreadful catastrophe. But the cares of the shepherd devolved upon his eldest son Shem, the great progenitor of God's ancient people,—a man, it would seem, imbued with a religious

* Gen. iv. 20. † Gen. ix. 20.

spirit, and devoted to a contemplative life, to which that employment is peculiarly favourable. By him it was transmitted to his renowned descendant Abraham, with whom he lived more than a hundred years. While it appears from the history of Laban, that the other branches of his family continued, after his example, to tend their flocks and their herds on the banks of the Euphrates and its tributary streams, the posterity of Abraham followed the same employment in the fertile pastures of Canaan, for several succeeding ages. This is the account which Joseph gave to Pharaoh, when his family came down into Egypt :—'The men are shepherds; for their trade has been to feed cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have.'* And he directed them to say, when they should be admitted to an audience of the king :—'Thy servants' trade has been about cattle, from our youth even until now, both we and also our fathers.'

[The fact is, that the shepherd life, from the lightness of its labours, and its being independent of those mechanical implements which imply some progress in the knowledge of the useful arts, became naturally the most common occupation in the early ages of the world. For although some few might here and there collect into villages and towns to follow the pursuits of agriculture, and engage in different branches of industry, it was only a small portion of ground in the environs of inhabited places that ever was brought under cultivation, while the vast tracks of unoccupied country that lay beyond in the wild luxuriance of nature, invited numbers to dedicate themselves to the simple task of keeping flocks as a mode of life both open and accessible to all, and, at the same time, offering a sure path to wealth and independence. No course of long previous training—no possession of extensive capital—no anxious looking out and choice of a suitable place for fixing a habitation was requisite. The person, who

* Gen. xlvi. 32.

embraced the life of a shepherd, had only to retire from the neighbourhood of a settled population into the depths and solitudes of the mountains and valleys, and there to spread his flocks and herds at will over the inexhaustible pastures: and so little care was this attended with, that, when necessity required him to remove from one place to another in quest of fresh and untrodden meadows, he had no painful ties to sever; but, along with his bleating charge, of which his whole substance consisted, he transported his family, and, in pitching his tent, carried his home and his all, along with him, wherever he went. To the obvious advantages of this manner of life, must be ascribed its great prevalence in that quarter of the world, which formed the cradle and first residence of the human family; and as the manners and customs of the East generally, and of pastoral tribes in particular, are subject to little or no change, we may see in the habits of the sheichs and their wandering tribes, in the present day, the model of that state of society which obtained in the early times to which the history of the patriarchs refers. Among those roving inhabitants of the desert, every person who is the owner of sheep and cattle, as his family rises around him, and that family, extending to a number of different branches, becomes a tribe, is acknowledged as the common head to whom alone they all look up, and who alone is the common centre of their union and interests; and as their frequent and almost daily removals keep them distinct and isolated from those who have settled down into the institutions and habits of social life, they continue perfectly independent, acknowledging no other king or superior than their chief, governed by no other law than his will, to which, whether he lives or not, time gives the character and authority of traditionary custom—and influenced in the maintenance of friendly or hostile relations with their neighbours, by no other considerations than their own sense of what appears the interest of the tribe.] In like manner,

the patriarchal shepherds, rich in flocks and herds, in silver and gold, and attended by a numerous train of servants purchased with their money, or hired from the neighbouring towns and villages, acknowledged no civil superior; they held the rank, and exercised the rights of sovereign princes; they concluded alliances with the kings in whose territories they tended their flocks; they made peace or war with the surrounding states; and, in fine, they wanted nothing of sovereign authority but the name. Unfettered by the cumbrous ceremonies of regal power, they led a plain and laborious life, in perfect freedom and overflowing abundance. Refusing to confine themselves to any particular spot (for the pastures were not yet appropriated), they lived in tents, and removed from one place to another, in search of pasture for their cattle. Strangers in the countries where they sojourned, they refused to mingle with the permanent settlers, to occupy their towns, and to form with them one people.* They were conscious of their strength, and jealous of their independence; and, although patient and forbearing, their conduct proved, on several occasions, that they wanted neither skill nor courage to vindicate their rights and avenge their wrongs. In the wealth, the power, and the splendour of patriarchal shepherds, we discover the rudiments of regal grandeur and authority; and in their numerous and hardy retainers, the germ of potent empires. Hence the custom so prevalent among the ancients, of distinguishing the office and duties of their kings and princes, by terms borrowed from the pastoral life.† The sacred writers, especially, very often speak

* In some countries of Africa the modern Bedouin tribes, when the ponds in the desert are dried up, pitch their tents and pasture their flocks in the cultivated regions among the villages, permission being granted them by the Sultan, who levies heavy duties upon them, paid in cows, camels, and sheep. But in other parts, they refuse to submit to such exactions; and, like the ancient patriarchs, tend their flocks where they please.—*Burckhardt's Travels*, p. 486.

† Agamemnon, shepherd of the people, is a phrase to be met with every where in the strains of Homer.

of kings under the name of shepherds, and compare the royal sceptre to the shepherd's crook :—'He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheep-folds; from following the ewes great with young, he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance. So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.'* And Jehovah said to David himself :—'Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel.'†

The royal Psalmist, on the other hand, celebrates, under the same allusions, the special care and goodness of God towards himself, and also towards his ancient people. 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.' 'Give ear, O shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock.'‡ But to multiply quotations is useless; in an hundred places of Scripture, the church is compared to a sheep-fold, the saints to sheep, and the ministers of religion to shepherds, who must render at last an account of their administration to the Shepherd and Overseer to whom they owe their authority.

The patriarchs did not commit their flocks and herds solely to the care of menial servants and strangers; they tended them in person, or placed them under the superintendence of their sons and their daughters, who were bred to the same laborious employment, § and

* Psalm lxxviii. 70. † 2 Samuel v. 2.

‡ Psalm xxiii. 1, and lxxx. 1.

§ The classical writers, too, frequently represent the sons and daughters of kings in times not long posterior to those of the patriarchs as engaged in these simple occupations. Minerva appeared to Ulysses in the form of a very young shepherd, such as the sons of kings are wont to be. This primeval simplicity was long retained among the Greeks. Homer often sends the daughters of princes and nobles, to tend the flocks, to wash the clothes of the family at the fountain, or in the flowing stream, and to perform many other menial services. Adonis, the son of Cinyras, a king of Cyprus, fed his flocks by the streaming rivers :—

'Et formosus oves ad flumina pavit Adonis.'—*Vir.* Ecl. x. 1, 18.

Andromache, the wife of Hector, complains that Achilles had slain her seven brothers when they were tending their flocks and herds.

taught to perform, without reluctance, the meanest services. Rebecca, the only daughter of a shepherd prince, went to a considerable distance to draw water; and it is evident from the readiness and address with which she let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and gave drink to the servant of Abraham, and afterwards drew for all his camels, that she had been long accustomed to that humble employment. From the same authority we know, that Rachel, the daughter of Laban, kept her father's flocks, and submitted to the various privations and hardships of the pastoral life, in the deserts of Syria.* The patriarch Jacob, though he was the son of a shepherd prince, kept the flocks of Laban, his maternal uncle; and his own sons followed the same business, both in Mesopotamia, and after his return to the land of Canaan.

This custom has descended to modern times; for in Syria, the daughters of the Turcoman and Arabian shepherds, and in India, the Brahmin women of distinction, are seen drawing water at the village wells, and tending their cattle to the lakes and rivers.

But in the course of ages, when men settled in towns, and luxury, with the progress of the arts, advanced, the occupation of the shepherd gradually declined, till it fell into supreme contempt. This was particularly the case in Greece, where it had once been held in the highest estimation; and Theocritus has, in his Idylls, left us more than one striking example of the insults which these successors of princes and nobles had to suffer in his time.† It is by no means improbable that the same feeling operated in other countries; and, it is supposed, the prophet Amos alludes to it in the frank

Æneas pastured his oxen on mount Ida, when Achilles seized them, and forced the Trojan hero to flee. Phœbus himself was a keeper of oxen in the groves and valleys of Mount Ida.

* D'Arvieux Voy. dans la Palest. p. 230. Dr Russel's Hist. of Aleppo, MS. note quoted by Dr Clarke.

† The learned reader may consult Bochart's Hieroz. lib. ii. c. 39, p. 382.

avowal which he makes to the priest of Bethel of his original condition :—' I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit.' *

The flocks and herds of these shepherds were immensely numerous. So great was the stock of Abraham and Lot, that they were obliged to separate, because ' the land was not able to bear them.' From the present which Jacob made to his brother Esau, consisting of five hundred and eighty head of different sorts, we may form some idea of the vast number of great and small cattle, which he had acquired in the service of Laban.† In modern times, the numbers of cattle in the Turcoman flocks, which feed on the fertile plains of Syria, are almost incredible. They sometimes occupy three or four days in passing from one part of the country to another. Chardin had an opportunity of seeing a clan of Turcoman shepherds on their march, about two days distance from Aleppo. The whole country was covered with them. Many of their principal people with whom he conversed on the road, assured him, that there were four hundred thousand beasts of carriage, camels, horses, oxen, cows, and asses, and three millions of sheep and goats.‡ This astonishing account of Chardin, is confirmed by Dr Shaw, who states, that several Arabian tribes, who can bring no more than three or four hundred horses into the field, are possessed of more than so many thousand camels, and triple the number of sheep and black cattle. Russel, in his history of Aleppo, speaks of vast flocks

* Amos vii. 14.

† Job, in the days of his early prosperity, was the owner of 7000 sheep, 3000 camels, 500 oxen, and 500 she asses; and, in his latter days, through the special blessing of God, after his recovery, possessed twice that number. Mesha, king of Moab, was also a pastoral chief, and, being tributary to the king of Israel, paid a yearly tax of 100,000 lambs, and 100,000 rams, with the wool. 2 Kings iii. 4.—*Editor.*

‡ MS. vol. vi. The account given to the traveller was probabl exaggerated,—*Editor.*

which pass that city every year, of which many sheep are sold to supply the inhabitants. The flocks and herds which belonged to the Jewish patriarchs, were not more numerous.*

[It may contribute to convey to the mind of the reader a livelier idea of the numbers and economy of the immense flocks, kept by Oriental shepherds, to insert the following interesting description given of one by a modern traveller:—'It was entertaining enough to see the horde of Arabs decamp, as nothing could be more regular. First went the sheep and the goat-herds, each with their flocks in divisions, according as the chief of each family directed; then followed the camels and asses, loaded with the tents, furniture, and kitchen utensils; these were followed by the old men, women, boys, and girls on foot. The children that cannot walk are carried on the backs of the young women, or the boys and girls; and the smallest of the lambs and kids are carried under the arms of the men or children. To each tent belong many dogs, among which are some greyhounds; some tents have from ten to fourteen dogs, and from twenty to thirty men, women, and children belonging to it. The procession is closed by the chief of the tribe, who is called Emir, or prince, mounted on the best horse, and surrounded by the heads of each family, all on horses, with many servants on foot. Between each family is a division, or space, of a hundred yards or more when they migrate; and so great regularity is observed, that neither camels, asses, sheep, nor dogs mix, but each keeps to the division to which it belongs, without the least trouble. They had been here eight days, and were going four hours journey to the north-west, to another spring of water. This tribe consisted of about 850 men, women and children. Their flocks of sheep and goats were about 5000, besides a

* Shaw's Travels, vol. i. pp. 303, 309. Russel's History of Aleppo, vol. i. pp. 165, 388, &c. Harmer's Observations, vol. i. pp. 210, 211.

great number of camels, horses and asses. Horses and greyhounds they breed and train up for sale; they neither kill nor sell their ewe-lambs.' *]

The care of such overgrown flocks required the attention of many shepherds. These were of various characters and gradations, the master of the family, his children, and home-born slaves, with a number of herdsmen hired to assist them, and who often felt but little interest, and took but little care, in the preservation and increase of their charge. In Hebrew, these persons, so different in station and feeling, were not distinguished by appropriate names; the master, the slave, and the hired servant, were all known by the common appellation of shepherds. The distinction, not sufficiently important to require the invention of a particular term, is expressed among every people by a periphrasis. The only instance in the Old Testament, in which the hired servant is distinguished from the master, or one of his family, occurs in the history of David, where he is said to have left the sheep in the hand of a keeper (*al shumer*), while he went down to visit his brethren, and the armies who were fighting against the Philistines under the banners of Saul.† In such extensive pastoral concerns, the vigilance and activity of the master were often insufficient for directing the operations of so many shepherds, that were not unfrequently scattered over a considerable extent of country. An upper servant was therefore appointed to superintend their labours, and take care that his master suffered no injury. In the house of Abraham, this honourable station was held by Eliezer, a native of Damascus, a servant in every respect worthy of so great and good a master. The numerous flocks of

* Parson's Travels from Aleppo to Bagdad.

† 1 Sam. xvii. 20. This word exactly corresponds with the Latin term *custos*, a keeper, which Virgil uses to denote a hireling shepherd, in his tenth Eclogue:—

> 'Atque utinam ex vobis unus, vestrique fuissem
> Aut custos gregis, aut maturæ vinitor uvæ.'—l. 36.

Pharaoh, seem to have required the superintending care of many overseers.* Doeg, an Edomite, was entrusted with the whole pastoral establishment of Saul.† But in the reign of David, the important office of chief herdsman was abolished, and the vast flocks and herds of that monarch were entrusted to a number of superintendents; animals of the same species forming a separate flock, under its proper overseer.‡ These overseers, in the language of the Hebrews, were called the princes of the flock, or chief shepherds; they were treated with great distinction, and seem to have been selected in the reign of David from among the nobles of his court. This office, in those days, whether vested in one individual, who was charged with the oversight of all the flock, or in several, who had absolute power over a number of subordinate keepers in each department, was one of great importance and dignity,—on the faithful discharge of which, the power and splendour of an eastern potentate greatly depended.§ [The chief shepherd is empowered with absolute control over the whole flocks and their keepers. To him the common shepherds must make from time to time their report of the state of their bleating charge, and the good or bad condition of the pasturage. It is his duty to ride through each separate division of the tribe; to inspect the cattle; to inquire into the character and condition

* Gen. xlvii. 6. † 1 Sam. xxi. 7.

‡ 1 Chron. xxvii. 29. The office of chief herdsman was not abolished in the reign of David. But owing to the royal demesnes, where the king's numerous flocks were pastured, being situated in different and distant parts of the country, the oversight of them was of necessity committed to several officers, each of whom, however, were chief shepherds in their own department. Five are mentioned, and they seem to have been nobles attached to the court.—*Editor.*

§ The guardian or controller of the royal herds of mares, which are very large, is an officer in Persia of considerable consequence, and is selected always from men of rank and importance in the state; and his office is to register every foal as it falls. He has subordinate agents, entrusted severally with the charge of twenty mares, and with the choice of their pastures.—*Morier's Trav.* vol. i. p. 302.

of the men under his charge; and according as he finds them active or negligent, faithful or unqualified for their situation, to reprove or dismiss the old, and appoint new ones at pleasure. From his verdict there is no appeal; and when he goes his periodical rounds, each subordinate shepherd expects to receive censure or commendation, according as to the chief shepherd it shall seem proper to award.*] The office of chief shepherd, therefore, being in pastoral countries one of great trust, of high responsibility, and of distinguished honour, is with great propriety applied to our Lord by the apostle Peter:—'And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory which fadeth not away.'† The same allusion occurs in these words of Paul:—'Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great,' or chief, 'shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will.'‡ A similar illustration is made by the Psalmist, 'Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock.'

Among oriental shepherds, of course, as elsewhere, there would be a great diversity in their natural powers of observation, their acquired skill in cattle, the prognostics of the weather, and the best places for pasturage; but the only other distribution of them mentioned in the holy Scriptures, is into good and bad, *i. e.*, faithful or careless. A bad or foolish shepherd is thus described by the prophet:—'And the Lord said unto me, Take unto thee yet the instruments

* Among the pastoral districts of Spain, where many oriental customs, introduced by the Moors, are still preserved, the office of chief shepherd is well known at this day. 'Ten thousand compose a flock, which is divided into ten tribes. One man has the conduct of all. He must be the owner of four or five hundred sheep, strong, active, vigilant, intelligent in pasture, in the weather, and in the diseases of sheep. He has absolute dominion over fifty shepherds. He is chief shepherd of the flock.'—*Gentleman's Mag.*

† 1 Pet. v. 4. ‡ Heb. xiii. 20.

of a foolish shepherd.* For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, which shall not visit those that are cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that which is broken, nor feed that which standeth still; but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces. Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock.'† In this passage, the prophet fixes a mark of indelible infamy upon the unfaithful shepherd; he calls him a person of no use. A man of nought was, among the Hebrews, an expression of utter contempt. The idols which the heathens worshipped, they accordingly stigmatized as things of nought, or of no value. 'An idol,' says the apostle Paul, 'is nothing,' or of no value, 'in the world.'‡ In the same light the sorrowful patriarch regarded his unkind friends:—'Ye are all physicians of no value.'§ Such were the rulers of Israel in the days of Zechariah; they were foolish or useless shepherds, who neglected every part of their duty; they neither brought back the sheep which had wandered from the fold, and knew not how to return; nor visited that which was ready to perish. They were not careful to bind up the fractured bone, nor heal that which was worried and wounded; nor to furnish those that through weakness stood still, and could not move to fresh pastures, with food, to preserve them in good condition: but they rioted on the flesh of the fat; they tore their limbs asunder; and like a company of rapacious wolves, they devoured every thing, not sparing even the meanest and the least useful parts of the carcase. By this hyperbole, the prophet meant, that the rulers of his people, disregarding the duties of their office, and the plainest dictates of justice and equity, turned every thing to their own advantage.

The prophet Jeremiah pronounces a curse upon the

* *i. e.* the equipment of a pretended shepherd, the coat, the bag, the staff, or crook.—*Editor.*

† Zech. xi. 16, 17. ‡ 1 Cor. viii. 4. § Job xiii. 4.

unfaithful shepherds, by whom he means the proud and oppressive rulers of his people:—'Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel, against the pastors that feed my people: Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them; behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord.'* No shepherd perhaps is so foolish and wicked, as literally to scatter the flock, entrusted to his care, and drive them away; this is rather the work of lions and wolves, that prowl about the fold, watching the favourable moment to seize their victim. But the negligent shepherds allowed these to scatter the flock, by suffering them to wander, and neglecting to visit and bring them back to the fold.†

The prophet Ezekiel has imitated, and beautifully amplified, the metaphor of Jeremiah:—'Woe to the shepherds of Israel, that do feed themselves!‡ Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat,§ and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed; but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they be scattered, because there is no

* Jer. xxiii. 1, 2.

† The hiphil form of the Hebrew verb, often admits of this passive sense; thus, the hiphil of the verb (*hiah*), to live, signifies not to cause, but to permit a person to live; and it is extremely probable, that the prophet uses the verb (*nadah*), in the hiphil form, in the same sense here.

‡ In this and similar passages, the idea of chief shepherd is evidently implied, as the magistrates and priests, whose unfaithful and rapacious conduct is censured, were only under-shepherds, responsible to the great shepherd of Israel.—*Editor.*

§ The word here translated *fat* is rendered by some the *cream.* —*Editor.*

shepherd; and they become meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill; yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did seek or search after them.'* All the care of these foolish, these unfaithful shepherds, was to enrich and aggrandise themselves. Should not the shepherd feed the flocks? The common sense of mankind finds no difficulty in answering the question: this is the very design of his office, and he betrays his trust if he do not provide suitable food for them, or conduct them to where it may be found. Instead of this, these shepherds fed themselves; they thought of nothing but how to indulge their own luxurious appetites, securing the profits of their places, fleecing their unhappy subjects, and even cutting them off by mock trials, in order to get possession of their property. Disregarding the welfare of those committed to their care, they fed not the flock: either they were so ignorant, that they knew not how to feed them; or so lazy and slothful, they could not make the necessary exertions; or so treacherous and unfaithful, they neither desired nor intended to perform their duty. They took no care to vindicate those that had suffered wrong, nor to defend the innocent from the craft or the violence of their enemies. The magistrate suffered the poor to starve for want of the common necessaries of life; the priest allowed them to grow up in ignorance and vice, a burden to themselves, and a nuisance to society; and the statesman, intent only on enriching himself and his connexions, applied no suitable or effectual remedies to the growing distempers which threatened the vitals of the state. Wild misrule and confusion every where prevailed, and threatened to overwhelm all orders of men in one common destruction. Alarmed by these public calamities, to which no end could be discovered, many left their native land, already weakened and im-

* Ezek. xxxiv. 2-6.

poverished, to linger out a precarious and miserable existence in foreign countries, resigning the place of their fathers' sepulchres an easy prey to the first invader. Yet these wretched exiles were neither sought for, nor encouraged to return; but were rather confirmed in their determination to spend the remainder of their years in voluntary banishment, by the unrelenting cruelties and oppressions which the friends and relations whom they left behind them, were compelled to endure.

Dishonesty and cowardice are two additional features in the character of bad shepherds, specially mentioned by our Lord himself. 'He that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.'* In this manner, according to Joel, were the ministers of divine vengeance to act:—'They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall; they shall climb upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief.'† To the dishonest practices of eastern shepherds, who do not seem to have been more correct in their manners than those in less genial climes, allusion is made in this passage; and we learn from various writers, that many herdsmen and shepherds in Egypt, Judea, and the neighbouring countries, daily practised the crimes of theft and robbery; which Bochart supposes might be the reason that shepherds were in the times of Joseph, 'an abomination to the Egyptians.'‡ The circumstances of our Lord's parables are commonly borrowed from real life; and therefore he alludes, not without cause, to those shepherds who lived by rapine and plunder.

'But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth

* John x. 1. † Joel ii. 9.

‡ Hieroz. lib. ii. cap. 44, pp. 448, 449.

because he is an hireling and careth not for the sheep.' This description applies only to those who, equally indifferent to the voice of duty and the solicitations of honour, are actuated by a base and mercenary spirit; for a hired servant may be faithful to his master, not less than a son or a slave born in the house.* The patriarch Jacob furnishes an illustrious example of persevering and unshaken fidelity to Laban, although that envious relative changed his wages ten times, and otherwise treated him with great injustice.

From the base character and disgusting conduct of the bad, we turn with satisfaction to the virtuous dispositions and pleasing exertions of the good shepherd, to whose employment and manners, the sacred writers often allude. Under the name of a shepherd, the Messiah delighted to reveal himself, by his servants the prophets, to the ancient church, and to describe his fidelity to his Father, and his tender care of his people; and no images that have been selected could have conveyed so admirable an idea of the interest he took in them; of the unceasing vigilance with which he watched over them, and the kindly assiduity with which he provided for them in all their wanderings, and conducted them to the places best suited for their reception. The Syrian shepherds were obliged to lead their numerous flocks and herds into the desert, or thinly inhabited country, to pasture. Moses led the flocks of Jethro 'to the back side of the desert.' The patriarchs wandered with their cattle among the towns and villages of

* The Jewish shepherds were condemned for carelessness, in not searching for or rescuing the scattered sheep. When men are fatigued, says Mr Campbell, by travelling, they become lazy and indolent, and feel indisposed to set off in search of strayed or stolen cattle many miles distant.—*African Light*, p. 155. The faithful shepherds, says Mr Murray, protect the flock from the attacks of wolves and bears, against whose approach they at once offer battle, and with whom they have many a tough contest; although the mercenary shepherds, rather than encounter the personal risk, let the ravenous beasts carry off their prey.—*A Summer in the Pyrenees by the Honourable J. E. Murray.—Editor.*

Canaan, and fed them even in the most populous districts without molestation. And it is a remarkable fact, 'that the Kenites and Rechabites lived in Palestine under tents, and fed their cattle wherever they could find pasture, when the country was crowded with inhabitants long after it had been divided by lot among the tribes. The Bedouin Arabs claim the same privilege in those countries to this day, which, depopulated as they are, probably contain as many inhabitants in their towns and villages, as in the days of Abraham.'* Nor is this custom peculiar to Palestine ; in Barbary and other places, they live in the same 'mannner. 'Great numbers of Arabian shepherds come into Egypt itself, in the months of November, December, and January, from three or four hundred leagues distance, to feed their camels and their horses. After having spent some time in the neighbourhood of the Nile, they retire into the deserts, from whence, by routes with which they are acquainted, they pass into other regions to dwell there, in like manner, some months of the year, till the return of the usual season recalls them to the vale of Egypt.'†

[These habits of pastoral tribes in the East, feeding their immense flocks in the neighbourhood of inhabited towns, and of different tribes mingling indiscriminately in the same country, will serve to throw light on several passages in the early history of the Israelites, not easily understood without a knowledge of them. After the settlement of Canaan, and the division of the country, agriculture became the principal business of the Hebrew nation, and consequently the numbers who adhered to the pastoral mode of life were comparatively few ; and the territories left in a state of pasturage would become for the most part private property. It was for this reason that the tribes of Reuben and Gad solicited that part of the country which lay beyond Jordan as their inheritance,

* Reland. Palest. p. 261. † Maillet, Let. i. pp. 24, 25.

in consequence of their having a great multitude of cattle.* Very rich and extensive pastures, too, abounded on the mountain range of Gilead and Bashan, beyond which the interminable plains of Arabia stretched out, not always in sandy deserts, but in many places in beautiful tracks of rich and almost inexhaustible verdure, which were occupied by the Israelites, excepting the territories in the north and south of this region, which belonged respectively to the Ammonites and the Moabites. These tracks were entirely appropriated to pastures, but it was not uncommon, as it appears, even in the time of David, to cultivate large flocks in the inland side of Jordan, on the hills of Ephraim and Judah; and down to the birth of Christ shepherds pursued these peaceful occupations even in the very heart of Judea. The borders of that country were inhabited by various races, all of whom devoted themselves to the labours of a pastoral life; and though many of them had built towns and villages, yet they also wandered about in a very unsettled state, having no certain boundaries within which they confined themselves; and finding themselves often mingled with the tents and flocks of different people. Hence the frequent wars between them and the Israelites in the time of the Judges, which, however, partook more of the character of tumultuary movements—the predatory incursions of the modern Arabs—than that of a regular warfare.]

To this custom of leading the flocks from one country and region to another, the royal Psalmist alludes in that beautiful pastoral:—'The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for his name's sake.'† We are taught by the prophet, to look for the same blessings from the vigilant care and tenderness of Messiah: 'They shall feed in the

* Num. xxxii. 1-5. † Psa. xxiii. 1-3.

ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them; for he that hath mercy on them, shall lead them; even by the springs of water shall he guide them, And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted.'* The conduct of the eastern shepherd, in leading his flock to the green pastures and the still waters, is clearly alluded to by John in the book of Revelation :—'For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.' † But the character of a good shepherd is no where delineated with greater force and beauty, than in a passage of Ezekiel, where Jehovah promises to gather his people from all their dispersions, and plant them in their own land: 'For thus saith the Lord God, Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel, by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places in the country. I will feed them upon a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be; there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.' ‡ In the seventeenth verse, he promises to 'judge between cattle and cattle, between

* Isa. xlix. 9-11. † Rev. vii. 17. ‡ Ezek. xxxiv. 11-16.

the rams and the he-goats.' To these words of the prophet, our Lord evidently alludes in his sublime description of the last judgment: 'And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.'*

That the shepherd might be able with greater ease and certainty to distinguish his sheep from those belonging to other flocks, he sets a peculiar mark on some part of their body.† To this practice the Saviour seems to allude in these words, 'I know my sheep,' by the seal of my Spirit impressed on their hearts.‡

It is added, 'the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.' A beautiful illustration of this is afforded in the history of David, who repeatedly risked his life in defence of his father's property; and it is still no uncommon thing in the East for the shepherds to encounter the lion and the bear, and drive them from the fold; and their own life, if they are anxious about their charge, is frequently endangered in those unequal combats. But the reference is to a greater than David, or any other eastern shepherd. The dangers they encountered, and the loss they sustained, were nothing to the labours and sufferings of Jesus Christ, who free-

* Mat. xxv. 32. The following observation beautifully illustrates this description:—'So completely,' says Mr Howard Malcolm, 'do sheep lose their distinctive features in these hot climates, that in seeing them mixed with goats, I never could tell them apart. They are never white as with us, and their wool degenerates into hair.'—*Travels in South Eastern Asia.* Though an unpractised eye could not discriminate often the sheep from the goats, the experienced shepherd knows each perfectly. So, though in this world hypocrites mingle with God's people, and resemble them outwardly, the Great Shepherd can, by the unerring glance of his omniscience, detect them, and, at the appointed season of the judgment, will divide the two classes of saints and sinners.—*Editor.*

† To this custom Virgil alludes in his first Georgic:—'Aut Pecori signum, aut numeros impressit acervis.'—I. 263. Columella says it was in the month of January that the shepherd marked the full grown lambs, and all other cattle, great and small.

‡ John x. 27.

ly laid down his life for the sins of his people, magnifying the law, and satisfying the justice of his Father, in their name.

The shepherds of the East were accountable for the flocks under their charge. Of this fact, the following extract from the Gentoo laws, furnishes a remarkable proof:—'Cattle shall be delivered over to the cow-herd in the morning; the cow-herd shall tend them the whole day with grass and water; and in the evening, shall re-deliver them to the master, in the same manner as they were entrusted to him;* if, by the fault of the cow-herd, any of the cattle be lost or stolen, that cow-herd shall make it good. When a cow-herd has led cattle to any distant place to feed, if any die of some distemper, notwithstanding the cow-herd applied the proper remedy, the cow-herd shall carry the head, the tail, the fore-foot, or some such convincing proof taken from the animal's body, to the owner of the cattle; having done this, he shall be no farther answerable; if he neglects to act thus, he shall make good the loss.' In this very situation was Jacob with Laban, his father-in-law, as we learn from his memorable expostulation, addressed to that deceitful and envious relation:—'This twenty years,' said the angry patriarch, 'have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she-goats have not cast their young; and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. That which was torn of beasts, I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night.'† The shepherds of the East do not receive their wages in money, but in a certain proportion, generally the tenth part, of the milk and of the lambs. Whatever is lost, while under their custody, so much is kept off their wages. To the part of the wages paid in lambs, reference is made in the

* In the very same manner the Italian shepherds tended their flocks.—*Varro de Re Rust.* lib. ii. cap. 10.

† Gen. xxxi. 38, 39.

words of Jacob to Laban. To the part payable in milk, there is allusion in the New Testament, where Paul says, 'who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?'* By the blessing of God upon his incessant care, the flocks of Laban had not cast their young; so that his stock, which was but very limited, when Jacob arrived, 'had increased into a multitude.'

The Syrian shepherds were exposed, with their flocks, to all the vicissitudes of the seasons. It was indeed impossible to erect buildings capacious enough to receive the countless numbers of cattle, which constituted the wealth of those pastoral princes. Their servants were, therefore, compelled to watch the flocks 'often both night and day, and for a whole month together, and repair into long plains and deserts without any shelter;' and when reduced to this incessant labour, they were besides chilled by the piercing cold of the morning, and scorched by the succeeding heats of a flaming sun, the opposite action of which often swells and chafes their lips and face.† Jacob complains, 'Thus I was; in the day, the drought consumed me, and the frost by night;‡ and my sleep departed from mine eyes.'§ In times long posterior to the age when Jacob flourished, the angels who descended to announce the birth of our Lord, found the shepherds to whom they were sent, keeping watch over their flocks by night. To prevent them from wandering, they shut them up in a fold formed of hurdles, and took their station on the outside, to defend them from the attacks of wild beasts, or bands of robbers, that infested the

* 1 Cor. ix. 7. Rosenmuller.

† Morier's Trav. vol. i. p. 54.

‡ The traveller has to undergo the same distressing vicissitudes in the depth of an Egyptian winter—'scorched by day and frozen by night.'—*Buckingham's Travels*, vol. i. preface, p. 15. Campbell, who traversed the scene of Jacob's adventures, says, 'Sometimes we lay at night in the open air, on which occasions I found *the weather as piercingly cold as it was distressfully hot* in the day time.—*Trav.* part ii. p. 100.

§ Gen. xxxi. 40.

country, and preyed upon the property of the peaceful and industrious inhabitants.

When the prophet Ezekiel threatened the Ammonites, that Rabbah, their capital, should become a stable for camels,* we are not to imagine that the Arabian shepherds were careful to provide such coverts for these more tender animals. Chardin says, that, as they feed them on the ground, and do not litter them, they never think of erecting such buildings for their reception. The same fact is admitted by Dr Shaw, when he makes a supposition that the cattle of these countries would be much more numerous than they are, if they had some little shelter in winter.† The only shelter to which they have recourse, is the desolate ruin ; and to this circumstance the prophet Ezekiel most probably alluded, when he described Rabbah as about to become a stable for camels, or, as the original term may be rendered with equal propriety, a place of camels, where they screen themselves from the rays of a burning sun, and feed on the nettles, and other plants, which spring up among the mouldering walls of ruined habitations. The same term is rendered in the twenty-third psalm, pastures ; and perhaps all that the prophet means is only this, that Rabbah should be so completely destroyed, that camels should feed on the place where it stood ; and if this was his meaning, it has been long since realized, for the last remains of that proud city have entirely disappeared.‡ [Indeed, it is the usual practice of shepherds in the East to conduct their flocks to some neighbouring ruins, for shelter during the heats of noon, and protection from the dangers of the night.

* Ezek. xxv. 5. † Trav. vol. i. p. 310.

‡ Chandler's Trav. pp. 130, 131, 151. The prediction of Ezekiel has been literally fulfilled. Rabbah was destroyed by the Saracens in the tenth century ; and though the Arabs have retained the name, nothing remains but a desolate heap of ruins. 'Its site,' says Burckhardt, 'is covered with the ruins of private buildings, and the tottering walls afford a shelter for the camels during the heat of the day.'

Many travellers have mentioned this as a common custom. Thus Chandler, after describing the remains of a famous temple of Apollo in Asia Minor, says,—'At evening, a large flock, returning to the fold, their bells tinkling, spread over the heap, climbing to browse on the shrubs and trees growing between the huge stones;' and that old ruins are frequently made use of also as a shelter from the scorching rays of the meridian sun, is attested by the same writer, who says, speaking of the dilapidated remains of Ephesus, a herd of goats was driven to it for shelter from the sun at noon. In providing such comfortable retreats for their flocks in the middle of the day, the oriental shepherds only act in conformity with the instincts of their bleating charge, which, of their own accord, gradually leave the higher grounds on which they have fed in the morning, repose in some low and shady place at noon, and re-ascend to the mountainous districts at the close of the day; and hence in allusion to this, 'when the spouse, addressing her beloved under the character of a shepherd, says, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon," —evidently indicating that they had a certain daily range, and that some shady place was selected to shelter them from the mid-day sun.'*

The greatest skill and vigilance, and even tender care, are required in the management of such immense flocks as wander on the Syrian plains. Their prodigious numbers compel the keepers to remove them too frequently in search of fresh pastures, which proves very destructive to the young that have not strength to follow,†—a circumstance taken notice of by Chardin, who says, 'The flocks of eastern shepherds feed down the places of their encampments so quickly, by the great numbers they have, that they are obliged to remove them to fresh pastures, before they are well able to bear the fatigues of travel.' This circumstance dis-

* Song of Solomon, i. 7. † Harmer's Observ. vol. i. p. 213.

plays the energy of Jacob's apology to his brother Esau, for not attending him as he requested :—'The flocks and herds with young are with me ; and if men should over-drive them one day, all the flocks would die.' It illustrates also another passage in the prophecies of Isaiah :—'He shall feed his flock like a shepherd ; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young,'—a beautiful image, expressing, with great force and elegance, the tender and unceasing attention of the shepherd to his flock.*

The implements which the oriental shepherds and herdmen used in the management of their flocks, were of various kinds. But in order to explain with greater accuracy the furniture of an oriental shepherd, it may be proper to begin with his vestments. To these the prophet Jeremiah refers, in his prediction of the success which was to crown the arms of Nebuchadnezzar in Egypt: 'He shall array himself with the land of Egypt, as a shepherd putteth on his garment ;'† or, as the expression evidently signifies, wraps his body in it with great care, to defend himself from the injuries of the weather. [The way in which a shepherd puts on his garment is, by fastening his left elbow fast in a fold of the plaid, and throwing it several times round his person, when it proves the firmest and most secure, as well as light and easy, defence for the body,—the best of all wraps, to use the words of Mr Vere Munro, for a wandering life, whether from the rain and the dew above, the cold around, or the hard ground to lie

* Often about sunset we saw shepherds slowly approaching Jerusalem from all sides, to seek shelter for their flocks during the night, in some of the deep valleys by which it is surrounded, carrying the lambs in their bosoms.—*Wilde*, ii. p. 407. It was in spring of last year that this traveller was in Palestine. Mr Fellowes saw a number of servants among the cattle, generally with aprons tied about them, in which they carried two or three young kids. They had often over their shoulders a small calf, with all its legs held together on the breast, exactly as seen on the bas-reliefs of Xanthas, and elsewhere.—*Asia Minor.—Editor.*

† Jer. xliii. 12.

upon.] So should that mighty potentate make himself absolute master of Egypt, clothe himself with its spoils, and remunerate himself and his army, for their long and unsuccessful service before Tyre.*

In the bag or scrip, which is mentioned by Samuel as a part of the shepherd's furniture, his provisions and other necessaries are carried. He bears in his hand a staff of considerable length, with which he keeps his cattle in order, and numbers them when they return from the field. To this instrument the Psalmist refers in that beautiful and affecting passage, where he addresses Jehovah as the shepherd of his soul :—'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil : for thou art with me ; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."† The same allusion is involved in the charge of the prophet Micah : 'Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitary in the wood, in the midst of Carmel.'‡ It was the custom of accurate or severe masters to number their flocks in the morning when they went out to pasture, and again in the evening when they returned to the field. But the more indulgent masters seem to have always numbered their flocks in the evening. Agreeably to this custom, the prophet Jeremiah is directed by the Spirit of God to promise, 'The flocks shall pass again under the hands of him that telleth them, saith the Lord.'§ The reference of these words to the rod of the shepherd numbering his flock, when they return from the pasture, appears from the verse immediately preceding :—'Thus saith the Lords of hosts, again in this place, which is desolate, without man and without beast, and in all the cities thereof, shall be an habitation of shepherds, causing their flocks to lie down.'

The ancient people of God were commanded in their law to devote the tenth of their flocks and their herds to

* Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii. cap. 44, pp. 455, 456.
† Psa. xxiii. 4. ‡ Mic. vii. 14. § Jer. xxxiii. 13.

the support of religion. The precept runs in these terms:—'And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock; even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord.'* 'In performing this part of their duty, the shepherds of Israel employed the rod; and to this custom these words of the prophet seem to refer:—'And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.'† In this passage the prophet is directed by Jehovah to inform the elders of his people who came to consult him in relation to their future destinies, that he would set aside a tenth part of them for himself, and in fulfilment of the covenant which he made with their fathers, restore them to their own land, and establish them for a peculiar people to himself. But the nine parts which remain after the tithing, shall not return from their dispersion, but go and serve the gods of the nations where they please.‡

Oriental shepherds also used an ox-goad, by which beeves are habituated or broken to the plough, and managed in the labours of the field. In the book of Judges, it is stated that Shamgar, one of the judges in Israel, used this weapon with terrible effect, against the enemies of his country. The incident is recorded in these terms: 'And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox-goad; and he also delivered Israel.'§ From this fact it is evident, that the ox-goad was a very formidable weapon; and Maundrell, who saw one that was still used in those parts, declares, it was of such a make

* Levit. xxvii. 32. † Ezek. xx. 37, 38.

‡ See Dr M'Crie's two sermons on the Unity of the Church, p. note. The custom of telling the flocks for the purpose of taking a certain proportion of tribute, was not peculiar to the Jews. Chardin says, it is a common custom in the East to count the flocks, in order to take the third of the increase and young ones for the king. Quoted by Harmer.—Ibrahim Pasha counted the Greeks who surrendered to him at Navarino, in the same manner as a shepherd tells his flocks, by admitting them one by one into an enclosure.—*Hartley's Researches*, p. 364.—*Editor.* § Judg. iii. 31.

and strength, as to be very dangerous in the hand of an exasperated enemy.* [He describes this implement as about 'eight feet long, and at the bigger end about six inches in circumference, armed at the lesser end with a sharp prickle for driving the oxen; and at the other end with a small paddle of iron, strong and massive, for cleansing the plough from the clay.' The testimony of Maundrell is supported by the authority of Homer, who, in the sixth book of the Iliad, celebrates the flight and destruction of the Bacchanals, that fell in a bloody affray by the ox-goad of Lycurgus. It is still further supported by the authority of a modern traveller, who says the goad used in Palestine for impelling oxen in the plough is 'of extraordinary length, sharp at one end for driving the cattle, and at the other is a kind of spade for cleansing the plough from the weeds and mud that retard its motion, so that such goad is necessary to avoid the incumbrance of the two instruments.'† 'It was no doubt this latter part of the instrument which Shamgar used as a battle-axe, and thus killed so many of his enemies.'‡]

But besides the rod and the goad, which the shepherd used in numbering or driving his cattle, and which he sometimes employed as a weapon to engage his enemies in close fight, he was provided with others to annoy them from a distance, among which were the javelin, the bow, and the sling.§ These weapons were

* Trav. pp. 110, 111.

† Rae's Travels, vol. ii. p. 159. ‡ Hartley's Researches, p. 309.

§ The use of the javelin and the arrow, is attested by Virgil, in his admirable description of the frantic wanderings of Dido:—'Like a wounded deer, whom, heedless of her fate, a shepherd, pursuing with his darts, has pierced at a distance among the Cretan woods, and left in the wound the winged steel unknown.—*Æneid*, lib. iv. l. 69. See also his description of the manner in which the African herdsman travels through his native wilds.—*Geor.* lib. iii. l. 344.

> 'Pastor agens telis, liquitque volatile ferrum
> Nescius.' *Æneid*, lib. iv. l. 70.

Also Geor. lib. iii. l. 342, and Varro de Re Rust. lib. ii. cap. 10.

in common use among the shepherds of Palestine, at a very early age, for Isaac directed his son Esau to take his weapons, his quiver and his bow, and go out to the field in quest of some venison.* 'When David engaged in single combat with Goliath, 'he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand;'† and with one of those stones he struck the blaspheming giant on the forehead, through the opening of the helmet, from whence the warrior surveyed his antagonist, —the only aperture in that piece of armour. 'So David prevailed over the Philistine, with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David.' In this daring action, the strength and dexterity of the stripling shepherd were eminently displayed; but still more the mighty arm and directing hand of Jehovah, who inspired the youthful breast with undaunted courage, nerved his arm, imparted more than mortal skill in taking his aim, and crowned his perilous attempt with a success equally great and unexpected. Such were the accoutrements of the Arabian shepherds from the remotest antiquity; accoutrements imposed upon them by the necessity of their circumstances, and which they often employed against their enemies with terrible effect.

A most important pastoral duty, in those regions, is to provide water for the flock. The living fountain and the flowing stream generally furnish a sure and abundant supply; but these are seldom to be found in the burning desert, where the oriental shepherd is often compelled to feed his cattle. In such circumstances, happy is he who finds a pool where his flocks may

* Gen. xxvii. 3.

† 1 Sam. xvii. 40. Shepherds in the East carry a sling and stones still for the purpose both of driving away or killing the enemies that prowl about to attack the flock, and also of punishing any stragglers from the fold.—*Roberts.—Editor.*

quench their thirst. Often, as he pursues his journey, a broad expanse of water, clear as crystal, seems to open to his view; and faint and weary under the fierce sun-beam, he gazes on the unexpected relief with ineffable delight, and fondly anticipates a speedy termination to his present distress. He sees the foremost camels enter the lake, and the water dashed about by their feet. He quickens his pace, and hastens to the spot; but to his utter disappointment the vision disappears, and nothing remains but the dry and thirsty wilderness.* To such deceitful appearances, the prophet opposes, with admirable effect, the real pool, the overflowing fountain, and the running stream; the appropriate symbols of those substantial blessings of grace and mercy, that were laid up in store for the church of Christ in the last days:—'And the parched ground (or the scorching heat) shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water.'† 'I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.' ‡

When the pool, the fountain, and the river fail, the oriental shepherd is reduced to the necessity of digging wells; and in the patriarchal age, the discovery of water was reckoned of sufficient importance to be the subject of a formal report to the master of the flock, who commonly distinguished the spot by an appropriate name.§ A remarkable instance of this kind is recorded by Moses in these terms: 'And Isaac de-

* Dr Clarke's Trav. in Palestine, vol. ii. p. 297. Koran, chap. xxiv., Sale's note. Morier's Trav. vol. i. p. 282. Kinneir's Geographical Memoir, p. 223. Shaw's Trav. vol. ii. p. 323. Humboldt's Personal Narrative, vol. ii. p. 40, and vol. iv. p. 328.—'In Sanscrit, the phenomenon of the Seraub or Mirage is called Mriga-trichna, thirst or desire of the antelope, no doubt because this animal, compelled by thirst (trichna), approaches those barren plains, where, from the inflection of the rays, he thinks he perceives the undulating surface of the waters.'—*Personal Narrative*, vol. ii. p. 554.

† Isa. xxxv. 7.

‡ Isa. xli. 18.

§ Forbes's Orient. Mem. vol. i. p. 215.

parted thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. And Isaac digged again the wells of water which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopt them after the death of Abraham; and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them. And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water. And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying the water is ours; and he called the name of the well Ezek, because they strove with him. And they digged another well; and they strove for that also, and he called the name of it Sitnah (opposition); and he removed from thence and digged another well: and for that they strove not; and he called the name of it Rehoboth (room); and he said, for now the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.'* 'Strife,' says Dr Richardson, 'between the different villagers and the different herdsmen here, exists still, as it did in the days of Abraham and Lot: the country has often changed masters; but the habits of the natives, both in this and other respects, have been nearly stationary.'† So important was the successful operation of sinking a well in Canaan, that the sacred historian remarks in another passage:—'And it came to pass the same day (that Isaac and Abimelech had concluded their treaty), that Isaac's servants came and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him, we have found water; and he called it Shebah (the oath), therefore the name of the city is Beershebah unto this day.'‡

To prevent the sand, which is raised from the parched surface of the ground by the winds, from filling up

* Gen. xxvi. 17.

† Trav. vol. ii. p. 196. Captain Light saw a band of shepherds, *armed with muskets*, in the act of watering their cattle at a well near Nazareth, in 1814. They were frequently opposed in their approaches to the water by a neighbouring and unfriendly tribe.

‡ Gen. xxvi. 33.

their wells,* they were obliged to cover them with a stone. In this manner the well was covered, from which the flocks of Laban were commonly watered; and the shepherds, careful not to leave them open at any time, patiently waited till all the flocks were gathered together, before they removed the covering, and then having drawn a sufficient quantity of water, they replaced the stone immediately. The extreme scarcity of water in these arid regions, entirely justifies such vigilant and parsimonious care in the management of this precious fluid; and accounts for the fierce contentions about the possession of a well, which so frequently happened between the shepherds of different masters. But after the question of right, or of possession, was decided, it would seem the shepherds were often detected in fraudulently watering their flocks and herds, from their neighbour's well. To prevent this, they secured the cover with a lock, which continued in use so late as the days of Chardin, who frequently saw such precautions used in different parts of Asia, on account of the real scarcity of water there.† According to that intelligent traveller, when the wells and cisterns were not locked up, some person was so far the proprietor, that no one dared to open a well, or a cistern, but in his presence. This was probably the reason why the shepherds of Padanaram declined the invitation of Jacob to water the flocks, before they were all assembled; either they had not the key of the lock which secured the stone, or if they had, they durst not open it, but in the presence of Rachel, to whose father the well belonged.‡ It is ridiculous to suppose, the stone was so heavy, that the united strength of several Mesopotamian shepherds could not roll it from the mouth of the well, when Jacob had strength, or address, to remove it alone; or, that though a stranger, he ventured to break a standing

* And also to prevent them being dried up by evaporation.—*Ed.*

† Harmer's Observ. vol. i. p. 198 ‡ Gen. xxix. 8.

rule for watering the flocks, which the natives did not dare to do, and that without opposition. The oriental shepherds were not on other occasions so passive, as the violent conduct of the men of Gerar sufficiently proves.

Twice in the day they led their flocks to the wells,—at noon, and when the sun was going down. To water the flocks, was an operation of much labour, and occupied a considerable space of time. It was, therefore, an office of great kindness by which Jacob introduced himself to the notice of his relations, to roll back the stone which lay upon the mouth of the well, and draw water for the flocks which Rachel tended. Some of these wells are furnished with troughs and flights of steps down to the water, and other contrivances, to facilitate the labour of watering the cattle.* It is evident the well to which Rebecca went to draw water, near the city of Nahor, had some convenience of this kind; for it is written, 'Rebecca hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.' † A trough was also placed by the Arabian well, from which the daughters of Jethro watered his flocks; ‡ and, if we may judge from circumstances, was a usual contrivance in every part of the East.§ [Without such contrivances, indeed, it would be impossible, in many places, to water the cattle at all; for, as in those arid climes there is seldom such abundance of water as we can easily procure in the flowing river or the pond, and the scanty store of the precious fluid that is collected in the well or the tank is rapidly diminished by the influence of the heat, as well as by daily consumption, necessity requires that it be drawn out of the deep and narrow reservoir, and poured into a basin or trough, where it may be within reach of the youngest

* Forbes' Orient. Mem. vol. iii. p. 280.

† Gen. xxiv. 20. ‡ Exod. ii. 16.

§ In modern times, Mr Park found a trough near the well, from which the Moors watered their cattle, in the sandy deserts of Sahara.—*Trav.* p. 146.

of the flock. The depth to which, from the causes now mentioned, the water is often reduced, has given rise to the natural expedient, in order to facilitate the task of the women, of furnishing many of the wells in the East with a flight of steps, by which a descent is effected to the water's edge, — a peculiarity of structure which will serve to explain that part of the sacred narrative, describing the movements of Rebecca, where it is said, 'She went down unto the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.' That pitcher was probably a large two-handled earthen jar, like what is still universally used in Palestine ; and the reader cannot fail to notice, that she carried it, not suspended in her hand, but aloft on her shoulder,—a mode of carrying burdens which is to this day the favourite practice of the women ; and travellers have often expressed their admiration of the dexterity with which the Arab maidens trip along with their beautiful long-necked vases nicely balanced, without assistance, on their heads, or supported, as many of them do, by the left hand on the shoulder.* Rebecca discovered no surprise, on re-ascending, to find a stranger standing at the entrance of the well; and to his urgent demand for a supply of the water for himself and camels, which it must have cost her so many labo-

* The following anecdote, though not belonging to Palestine, or any of the scenes of sacred history, may be subjoined as affording a pleasing illustration of manners exactly similar to patriarchal :— 'Greatly resembling the pastoral manners of the Mesopotamian damsels in the patriarchal days, the young women of Guzerat daily draw water from the public wells, and sometimes carry two or three earthen jars, placed over each other, upon the head, which, requiring perfect steadiness, gives them an erect and stately air. An English lady in India, whose great delight was to illustrate the Sacred Volume, by comparison with the modern manners and customs of the Hindoos, reading the interesting interview between Abraham's servant and Rebecca, at the gate of Nahor, to an intelligent native, when she came to that passage where the virgin went down to the well with her pitcher *upon her shoulder*, her attentive friend exclaimed, "Madam, that woman was of high caste!" This he implied from the circumstance of carrying the pitcher upon her shoulder, and not on her head. Some of the highest Brahmins do the same.' —*Editor.*

rious descents to provide for her own numerous charge, she responded with a courteous readiness, which conveys the most favourable impression of her character and manners. Such interviews are neither rare nor unexpected; for, as the native shepherdesses are always certain to be found watering their cattle at mid-day and at sunset, the wells naturally become convenient halting places, to which travellers direct their steps at those periods of the day, as well to supply themselves with the refreshing beverage, as to gain all requisite information about the place and people. An application for a draught of water is the usual commencement of a conversation; and scenes, like this incident in Rebecca's history, are still so frequently met with, as to afford the clearest proof that the pastoral manners of eastern shepherdesses retain the same beautiful and warm-hearted simplicity, by which they were distinguished in the days of Abraham. The two following anecdotes are given in illustration of this :—'We met on this road,' says Niebuhr '(the road from Orfa to Bir), with several wells, at which we stopped, while the young women of the neighbouring villages, or of the tribes of the Curds and Turcomans, who were wandering in these parts, came to water their flocks. They were not veiled, like those in the towns. As soon as we accosted them, and alighted from our horses, they brought us water to drink, and likewise watered our horses. Similar civilities had, indeed, been shown to me in other parts; but here it appeared to me particularly remarkable, because Rebecca, who was certainly brought up in this neighbourhood, showed herself equally obliging to travellers. Perhaps I have even drank at the same well from which she drew water.'* 'About five in the evening, the latter end of December,' says Mr Rae Wilson, 'upon entering the town of Nazareth, we saw two women filling their pitchers with water at a fountain, and about twelve others wait-

* Trav. part ii. p. 410.

ing for the same purpose, whom we desired to pour some water into a trough which stood hard by, that our horses might drink. We had scarcely made the request, before they instantly complied, and filled the trough, and the others waited with the greatest patience. Upon returning them thanks, one of them, with very great modesty, replied, We consider kindness and hospitality to strangers as an essential part of our duty.'* In repairing, then, at the time of drawing water, to the well at the gate of Nahor, which he knew was at no great distance from the residence of Bethuel,—in throwing himself upon the civilities of the young shepherdess for a draught of water, and on that simple act of hospitality founding his claim to her attention and interest in the inquiries he made about the family of the neighbouring sheich,-Eliezer acted on a thorough knowledge of the habits of the country. No other mode of inquiry he might have adopted, could, in a thinly-peopled and pastoral region like that through which he was travelling, have procured him so direct and accurate intelligence of the names and condition of the principal inhabitants, or have led so speedily to the accomplishment of the important errand for which he had been despatched to the Mesopotamian branch of his master's family, as by making for the well, and mingling in simple dialogue with the parties of native shepherdesses who frequented it, as their usual watering-place. One young maiden only appeared there,—a circumstance which renders it probable that her father, Bethuel, was the great pastoral chief of the neighbourhood, who possessed the exclusive right to the well. For in other places, where the population is more numerous, or the water scarce, a number of shepherds and shepherdesses collect from different quarters, with their respective flocks, to the same fountain; and while, among shepherds of peaceable manners, and who are on habits of amicable intercourse, those meetings are hailed

* Trav. vol. ii. p. 4.

with joy as the most pleasant in their solitary day, are the time for retailing gossip, the signals for the outbreak of all sorts of merriment, and are often enlivened with the song and the dance,—with others, who are of a contentious disposition, or where there is any jealousy and animosity between the rival tribes, they become scenes of bitter strife and rude competition, in which unmanly advantage is always taken of their gentler companions of the other sex. Della Vallè, and many other travellers, who passed through the dreariest parts of the desert, tell us that they always forgot their toils and privations when they reached the wells, and mingled in the company of the lively shepherdesses that repaired thither with their flocks ; and that the little kind offices which they rendered, in helping these nymphs of the mountains to water, were more than repaid by the pleasures of their society and generous hospitality, which were offered in return with the liveliest gratitude ; for in the present day, as of old, the female keepers of the flock are often subjected to the rudest treatment from their male companions, who, pressing forward, exclude them from the benefit of the well ; so that the bold and generous stranger, who happens to be resting there, and chooses to take the part of the fair daughters of the desert, renders them an important service, which they never fail to acknowledge, by offering to the traveller all the attentions in their power. It was by his courteous civility in hastening to remove the ponderous stone that covered the well of Haran,—the reader of the Bible will remember, —that Jacob introduced himself to the notice, and won the heart, of his fair Mesopotamian cousin ; and it was by the seasonable interposition of Moses, as champion of the seven daughters of Jethro, who would otherwise have suffered in his presence, as they usually did, from the rude violence of their male companions, that the illustrious fugitive ingratiated himself into the esteem of the simple-hearted Arabian shepherdesses, and re-

ceived a pressing welcome into the tent of the sheich, their father.

[Both Jacob and Moses, being poor and ill-equipped fugitives, had it not in their power to bestow any other mark of their regard than the simple, though important, service of their hands. But in the more ancient story of Rebecca, we find Abraham's confidential slave and messenger lavishing on her, as she stood at the well, a profusion of costly trinkets. Nor, however strange may seem to us the idea of decorating a young shepherdess, who was occupied in the humble task of carrying pitchers of water to provide for the flocks she had charge of, with ornaments of gold and silver, is this description in the least at variance with the habits of the time and place. Even in the present day, the Arab and Syrian shepherdesses often appear at the well under a load of ornamental finery; nor can this appear wonderful: the oriental females having universally a strong passion for gaudiness of dress, and covering the face and arms with a variety of rings and trinkets, it is natural that the young women of the pastoral countries, with whom the wells are the only places of public resort, where they ever mingle with the world, should be eager to bedeck themselves with all the valuables they can command. 'In the neighbourhood of Bethlehem,' says a recent traveller, 'we saw a band of young girls going to a well, with their pitchers on their shoulders, who appeared among the most beautiful of their sex we met in the East. They had slight and elegant figures, a native grace of mein and air, added to which, the tasteful drapery of their light simple attire, the dark tresses that fell in wild luxuriance over their necks and shoulders, braided with small gold coins, while a zone of the same brilliant material adorned their high expanded foreheads,—the music of their silver anklets, their long pendant ear-rings, and the bracelets that covered their arms in great numbers, cast an inexpres-

sible charm round those lovely Arab maidens.'* Another traveller, speaking of the Arab shepherdesses, says, 'They are all equally fond of ear-rings, nose-rings, finger-rings, ankle-rings, and bracelets. The women do not put by their fine dresses and ornaments, to wear them only at feasts and visits, like the ladies who live in towns, but deck themselves every day with whatever they regard as the most valuable in their wardrobe, and, even when engaged in the most common and daily duties, have often five or six bracelets on the same arm, and two or three rings in the same ear.'† We cannot wonder, then, at Eliezer's loading Rebecca with ear-rings and bracelets, the dowry with which her hand was won, as her appearance at the well would in all probability display her fondness for those glittering appendages of female dress.‡]

The scarcity of water, and the great labour and expense of digging away so much earth, in order to reach it, render a well extremely valuable, [and wherever such a treasure is found, the chief of the pastoral tribe, within whose territories it lies, claims the sole and exclusive right to the use and disposal of it, just on the same principle that proprietors of land with us claim the sole and exclusive right to the minerals that may be discovered on their estates.§ In summer time when the water is more than usually scarce, or where the wells are few and scanty in any particular route, the chief of the tribe repairs to it, and stations himself or

* Wilde's Trav. p. 410. † Burckhardt, vol. ii.

‡ There is a secret and important reason for the women of pastoral tribes being so loaded with gold and silver ornaments, as will appear from the following quotation:—'Upon my demanding the money which my guide had received previous to our departure, he protested that he had spent it; but drew from his breast a large ankle-ring. It was stamped as silver, and weighed nearly a pound. He had bought this for one of his wives,—a common method of investing money among the Arabs. These rings are worn by the women, who being held sacred, and left inviolate in the casualties of war, the property is thus secured.'—*V. Monro*, i. p. 13.—*Editor.*

§ Burckhardt.

some trusty attendants beside it, to demand tribute from all other tribes who pass or encamp near the well for the purpose of refreshing their cattle. But a single well, however copious and perennial, would not be sufficient for the wants of such immense flocks as oriental shepherds are the owners of; and as they are often obliged to remove to great distances in search of fresh pastures, it must be obviously a matter of prime importance with such extensive storemasters to have a plentiful supply of water wherever they wander. In these periodical removals, which are always confined to a certain round of places, every prudent shepherd takes care to have a well dug within a short and accessible distance of each spot, where he fixes his encampment in the course of the season; and—whether he keeps this well covered and locked in his absence, as was that of Rachel, or relies for its inviolable preservation on the habits of his pastoral neighbours, who are universally taught to pay a high and sacred respect for every watering place, he shifts about from one pastoral stage to another in the confident expectation that his property is safe, and that no one but an enemy would dare to encroach upon, or take the use of, the water without his permission. Whether the well has been digged by his own industry, or has been bequeathed to him by his ancestors, it is regarded according to the usage of nomadic tribes as the patrimonial possession of his family, or his tribe. He is infeft in it by the solemn and public bestowal of an appropriate name, and so long as the original name continues in use, it is a public and universal recognition of his claims. The property of such a well is seldom or never alienated, and in those cases where it does pass by right of purchase into other hands, the transference is made over with a number of ceremonies, and with all the care and deliberation that belongs to a species of property on which all pastoral people necessarily set a high value. The knowledge of the

great importance that is attached to, and the extreme jealousy felt about, the possession of a well, will serve to throw light on several particulars in the history of Abraham, Isaac, and their contemporaries. Like the modern shepherds of the East, those patriarchal chiefs had certain tracks in Canaan, which they visited in succession every year, to which custom—the law of wandering tribes, gave them exclusive possession. As the pastures were exhausted in one place, they removed to another, the plains of Moreh, Bethel-Mamre, and others being the regular halting places where they pitched their camps, whenever they traversed their annual circuit, and at some distance from each of these places (for the tents are seldom pitched very close to a well),* they had digged wells to which they gave names, and of which, therefore, they became the rightful proprietors, such as Abraham's at Beersheba, Isaac's at Esek, Sitnah, and Rehoboth, Laban's at Haran, and Jacob's at Sichem. Abraham being a man of energy and enterprise, and Jacob and his sons showing themselves both able and disposed to repel aggressions, we no where read of either being disturbed in the possession of the wells they had digged, and consequently the names originally bestowed upon them continued in use for ages after the decease of those venerable patriarchs, showing that they were universally acknowledged as the inheritance of the Hebrew tribe. But the more timid and passive disposition of Isaac allowed the assaults of his rude neighbours with impunity,—one remarkable instance of which occurred during his temporary sojourn among the Philistine tribe, when that people, fearing, lest he might claim a hereditary right to the wells which his father had digged, while here as the ally of a former

* The names of these wells generally originated in some circumstance connected with their history or their use, as Beersheba, from the alliance there contracted between Abraham and Abimelech, and Engeddi from a Hebrew word signifying the kid's fountain.—*Editor.*

king of Gerar, and by ultimately settling among them abridge the range of their free pastures, fell upon the expedient of changing the name, in order to obliterate all traces of the origin of the wells. But Isaac, having found means to restore the wells, asserted his claim by 'calling their names after the names by which his father called them.'*] As the water is often sold at a very high price, a number of good wells yield to the proprietor a large revenue. Pitts was obliged to purchase water at sixpence a gallon;† a fact which illustrates the force of the offer made by Moses to Edom; 'If I and my cattle drink of thy water, then will I pay for it.'‡ It is properly mentioned as a very aggravating circumstance in the overthrow of Jerusalem, that the ruthless conqueror forced the Jews to purchase with money, the water of their own wells, and the wood of their own trees: 'We have drunken our water for money; our wood is sold unto us.'§ Even a cup of cold water cannot always be obtained in Syria, without paying a certain price. It is partly on this account our Lord promises, that 'Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of those little ones, a cup of cold water, in the name of a disciple, should in no wise lose his reward.'‖

To stop, defile, or destroy the wells, is therefore justly reckoned an act of hostility. The Canaanites, envying the prosperity of Abraham and Isaac, and fearing their power, endeavoured to drive them out of the country, by stopping 'up all the wells which their servants had digged, and filling them with earth.'¶ The same mode of taking vengeance on enemies, mentioned in this passage, has been practised in more recent times. The Turkish emperors give annually to every Arab tribe near the road, by which the Mahommedan pilgrims

* Gen. xxvi. 18.
† Travels, vol. ii. p. 140. See also Major Rooke's Travels, p. 53.
‡ Numb. xx. 19.
§ Lam. v. 4.
‖ Matt. x. 42.
¶ Gen. xxvi. 15.

travel to Mecca, a certain sum of money, and a certain number of vestments, to keep them from destroying the wells, which lie on that route, and to escort the pilgrims across their country.* D'Herbelot records an incident exactly in point, which seems to be quite common among the Arabs. Gianabi, a famous rebel in the tenth century, gathered a number of people together, seized on Bassorah and Caufa; and afterwards insulted the reigning caliph, by presenting himself boldly before Bagdat, his capital; after which he retired by little and little, filling up all the pits with sand, which had been dug on the road to Mecca, for the benefit of the pilgrims.†

[Burckhardt informs us that while Soleyman Pacha held the government of Bagdad, an expedition was formed against Derayeh, in the country of the Wahabees. The invading army consisted of four or five thousand Turks, and double that number of Arab auxiliaries. Their march was parallel with the Persian Gulf, through a country abounding at every encampment with abundance of excellent wells. Instead of directing their route at once towards the intended place of attack, though it was only five or six days journey, they laid siege to the fortress of El Hassa, where the resistance being stronger than was anticipated, and the garrison being reinforced by a powerful Wahabee force under Saoud, the Turks raised the siege, and meditated a retreat. Saoud, however, expecting such a result, took the start of them, and by forced marches encamped at one of the principal wells on their way, while the other, at some distance from it, he rendered useless by emptying into it several camel loads of salt he had brought for the purpose. The men of Bagdad halted at this well, and their bitter disappointment may be more easily imagined than described, when they discovered the water to be as salt as that of the sea. The same cruel expedient

* Niebuhr's Account of Arabia, pp. 330, 331. † P. 396.

was adopted by the Wahabee Arabs in their late war with Mehemet Ali. All the wells in the route of the Egyptian soldiers they polluted with dead carcases, and thus rendered them useless.*]

Near the fountains and wells, the robber and assassin commonly took his station; and in time of war, the enemy placed their ambush, because the flocks and herds in which the wealth of the country chiefly consisted, were twice every day collected to those places, and might be seized with less danger when the shepherds were busily engaged in drawing water. This circumstance, which must have been familiar to the inhabitants of those countries, is mentioned by Deborah in her triumphal song :—'They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the place of drawing water, there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord.'† A perfect comment on these words is furnished by a historian of the crusades, who complains, that, during the siege of Jerusalem by the christian armies, numbers of their men were daily cut off, and their cattle driven away by the Saracens, who lay in ambush for this purpose near all the fountains and watering places.‡

[But it is unnecessary to go so far back as the time of the crusades for instances of robbers lurking for purposes of violence in the thickets that generally surround the wells, as almost every book of travels details attacks made by bands of Arab freebooters, who rush from their concealment on the defenceless strangers while refreshing themselves there. To mention only one out of many that might be given. Dr Shaw describes a splendid well in Barbary, the waters of

* Mr Roberts tells us the same malicious stratagem is practised in India. Many, when they have taken an ill will at a person, send their slaves during the night to fill up the poor man's well, Sometimes they throw in a dead serpent, or a crow, or a dog, to make the water impure.—*Editor.*

† Jud. v. 11. ‡ Harmer, vol. iii. p. 409.

which are made to flow into a large basin for the accommodation of travellers, and which was known by the name of *Shrub we krub*, that is, drink and away, as it is dangerous to linger there, it being so much infested with robbers and assassins.]*

As soon as the morning dawned, the shepherds led their flocks to the pasture, and tended them with solicitous care till the fourth hour of the day, or ten in the morning, according to our mode of dividing time, when they conducted them to the quiet waters, the shade and noonday repose.† This done, they led them again to the water, and then tended them till the evening, and the setting of the sun. To this method of tending the flocks, the sacred writers sometimes allude : ‘ Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon.’‡ ‘ The Lord is my shepherd ; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures : he leadeth me beside the still waters ;’§ where about mid-day the flocks repose under the projecting rock, or the spreading tree. Another allusion occurs in the prophecies of Isaiah : ‘ They shall not hunger nor thirst ; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them ; for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.’‖ ‘ I will feed them,’ said Ezekiel, ‘ upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country.’¶ But their care and labour were not then over ; all night long they were obliged to watch them, as has been already observed, prepared alike to repel the assault of the robber, or the wild beast. Jacob complains to Laban, that ‘ the heat by day, and the frost

* Shaw’s Travels, p. 63. See also Burckhardt’s Travels in Syria, p. 627.

† And Jacob said to the shepherds at the well of Haran, ‘ Lo, it is yet *high* day, neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together : water ye the sheep, and go and feed them.’

‡ Song, i. 7.

§ Ps. xxiii. 1, 2.

‖ Chap. xlix. 10.

¶ Chap. xxxiv. 13, 14.

by night, consumed him, and his sleep departed from his eyes;' and the shepherds, to whom the angels appeared at the birth of Christ, 'were in the field keeping watch over their flocks by night.' The dangers to which they were exposed in the wilderness, may be learned from the history of Job, whose servants were slain, and his cattle driven away by three bands of Chaldean freebooters. Such predatory expeditions, it is probable, were by no means unfrequent.

[The whole substance of pastoral people consisting in their flocks and herds, and wealth and power being consequently estimated by the numbers of these in their possession, it is easy to conceive the immense value which they will attach to them; and hence we find that not only was it a common way of propitiating enemies to make presents of cattle, as Jacob did at his dreaded interview with his injured brother, but of doing homage to a superior. It was an established mode of paying tribute; and hence when Moab is exhorted to yield obedience to the throne of David, the exhortation is made in these words, 'Send ye the lamb to the ruler of the land from Selah to the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion.'* The immense importance attached to the possession of flocks and herds will serve also to convey some idea of the terrible calamity in which they are involved when an invading army succeeds in depriving them of their stock. 'It is very difficult,' says Mr Campbell, 'for a manufacturing and commercial nation fully to conceive the greatness of such a catastrophe as this to a pastoral people to be deprived of their flocks. Such might justly say, in the language of Micah, "Ye have taken away my flocks, and what have I more?" God is represented as saying to Nebuchadnezzar, as his scourge to various nations, "Arise ye, go up to Kedar, and spoil the men of the East. Their tents and their flocks shall they take away."'†]

* Isaiah xvi. 1. † Jeremiah xlix. 28, 29.

Nor were they safe from the furious attacks of ravenous beasts, that approached the fold, and often, in spite of all their vigilance and exertions, broke into the enclosure, and carried off a part of their charge. When David kept his father's sheep, he had to encounter both a lion and a bear, which he vanquished, and rescued the prey from their devouring jaws. [The fact is, that the profession of a shepherd is vastly more responsible in the East than it is with us, where the flocks are kept in fields, enclosed on all sides by hedges, gates, or fences of various kinds; whereas in eastern countries, they wander and feed in widely-extending plains, or the open wilderness, where, but for the constant vigilance of their keeper, they would stray from the fold, or become a prey to the attacks of wild beasts. The severe and dangerous contests into which the shepherds, in defence of their helpless charge, were forced with the ravenous tenants of the desert, is graphically described by the prophet Amos: 'As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear;'* fragments which, according to the stern conditions imposed on eastern shepherds, he is required to produce, in order to satisfy his master of the desperate efforts he made to rescue the victim from the grasp of the beast of prey.† Sheep are proverbial for going frequently astray. In the course of browsing, they pass from one spot to another, and when they alight upon bare patches of ground, they shift away unconsciously to others of richer promise, or more inviting verdure, till, in these silent and repeated removals, they wander far away from the main body. Sometimes, too, in thinly peopled countries, a beast of prey suddenly

* Amos, iii. 12.

† The *two legs* of the sheep or goat not admitting of being widely separated, would be naturally laid hold of by a shepherd in attempting to wrest the animal from the beast of prey; and a piece of an ear is mentioned, as there is a species of goat very common in Palestine which has pendant ears, often a foot in length, and broad in proportion.—*Russell's Hist. of Aleppo.—Editor.*

springs in among them, producing a universal dispersion of the timid and defenceless flock; and that such dangerous visits were by no means unfrequent occurrences to the early shepherds of Palestine, is evident from the numerous allusions made to them by the sacred writers. Thus Micah says, 'As a young lion among the flocks of sheep, who, if he go through, both treadeth down and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver;'* and Jeremiah compares Israel, in the time of the captivity to 'a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away.'† In these circumstances, and as the stern laws of pastoral tribes make shepherds accountable for any of their charge that is amissing, it was imperative upon them, having left the rest of the flock in a place of security to go in search of that which was lost; and such acuteness did long experience produce, in observing the traces of feet, that the shepherds of the East, like the American Indians, could distinguish the footsteps of their flocks, not only over a wide track of country, but through the most circuitous paths, and amid the treadings of various other kinds of cattle. Allusion is made to these habits of keen and penetrating observation in that passage of Solomon's Song where the spouse says, 'Go thy way by the footsteps of the flock.'‡]

In the East, the manner of conducting sheep is very different from what obtains amongst us. The oriental shepherd marches before his flock to the field, with his rod in his hand, and his dog by his side; and they are so perfectly disciplined, that they follow him wherever he chooses to lead them. [Between an oriental shepherd and his sheep there subsists the most intimate and friendly relationship; for, as he is constantly beside them by night and by day, and is often called to the most active and persevering exertions in their defence, they learn to regard him as their protector, and instead of fleeing from him as the timid race do in Britain,

* Mich. v. 8. † Jeremiah l. 17. ‡ Song, i. 8.

they crowd around him, follow him wherever he leads the way, and never feel so secure as under his eye. Immense as the oriental flocks are, it is far more easy to manage them than would naturally be imagined. To facilitate the management of his charge, he gives names to his sheep, which answer to them, as dogs and horses answer to theirs in our part of the world.* 'He calleth his own sheep by name,' and it is interesting to notice how appropriate the names are to the animals. Thus, should a sheep have a bad temper, or any other failing, it is called the angry one, the sulky or wandering one, the mad one, the jumper, the limper, the dwarf, the fat, the long, the tricky one.† A recent traveller gives the following illustration of the custom alluded to in the Saviour's words :—I asked my man if it was usual, in this country, to give names to sheep. He informed me that it was, and that the sheep obeyed the shepherd when he called them by their names. This morning, I had an opportunity of verifying the truth of this remark. Passing by a flock of sheep, I asked the shepherd the same question which I put to my servant, and he gave me the same answer. I then bade him to call one of his sheep: he did so, and it instantly left its pasturage and its com-

* The shepherds of Egypt select a ram to lead the flock, and suspend a bell from his neck that they may follow him with greater ease and certainty. In Homer, a name was given only to a leader of the males, which was trained, when the shepherd called him by his name, to go before them. But in succeeding times names were given to both the males and females of the flock, although the practice of preparing the boldest and stateliest ram to lead them might continue. 'The same judicious practice,' says Mr Campbell, 'exists in South Africa to this day, where, however, goats are employed as leaders. The goat possesses much more fortitude than the sheep, and is more forward in advancing through difficulties, especially in crossing rivers; and the sheep, who are not fond of such exploits, implicitly follow him. While travelling in Africa I was necessitated always to have a few goats in the flock. They always took the lead, especially in crossing rivers, and they behaved so nobly, that had they been rational creatures, I should have returned them public thanks.'—*Afric. Light.* p. 86.

† Roberts Oriental Illustrations.

panions, and ran up to the hand of the shepherd with signs of pleasure, and with a prompt obedience, which I had never observed in any other animal. The shepherd told me that many of his sheep are still wild, that they had not yet learned their names, but that, by teaching, they would all learn them. The others which knew their names he called tame.'* 'The celerity with which the shepherds,' says Mr Murray, 'draw their scattered flock around them, is not more astonishing than the process, by which they effect it, is simple and beautiful. If they are at a great distance from him, he whistles upon them, and they leave off feeding and obey the call. If they are afar off, he utters a shrill

* Rev. J. Hartley. In a Greek pastoral, the shepherd Daphnis spake to the she-goats, and addressed the he-goats by name. And in another part of the same poem, he called some of them out of the flock by their names:—

— τας αιγας προσειπε και τους τραγους εκαλεσεν ονομαστι
Ὁδε Δαφνις εκαλεσε τινας αυτων ονομαστι.

Long. Pastoral. lib. iv. pp. 136, 147, quoted by Lampe in his work on John, vol. ii. p. 623.

Theocritus mentions the names by which he addressed some of his flock:—

Ουκ απο τας δρυος ὑτος ὁ Κοναρος ἁτε Κυναιθα
Τουτει βοσκησεισθε ποτ αντολας, ὡς ὁ φαλαρος.

'Wilt thou not leave the oak, Conarus, and thou Cynætha: Will ye not feed here towards the rising sun like Phalarus?'

Idyll. v. l. 102, 103.

Here Conarus and Phalarus are the names of he-goats, Cynætha the name of a she-goat. The flocks in the island of Cyrnon ran off when a stranger approached them; but when the shepherd blew his horn, they immediately recognized the sound, and scampered towards the spot from whence it came.—*Polybius*, lib. xii. In Syria and Palestine, the sheep distinguish the voice of their keeper from that of a stranger, and follow his call with the same readiness as the flocks of Cyrnon the horn of their shepherds. Virgil clearly alludes to this fact:—

'Parcete oves nimium procedere: non ripæ
Creditur.'——— *Eclogue* iii, 94.

'Ite domum, saturæ, venit Hesperus, ite capellæ.'—*Ecl.* x. 77.

ery, and instantly the flock are seen leaping down the rocks and scampering towards him. Having waited till they have mustered around him, the shepherd then sets off on his return to his resting-place, his flock following behind, like so many well trained hounds.' * Such is the beautiful order to which oriental shepherds train their flocks; but it is only themselves that can maintain such perfect discipline, as it is a hopeless undertaking for any but their wonted leader to attempt to conduct them. A young Persian of rank proved this: he learnt the names of a particular flock of sheep, and putting on the dress of their shepherd, went and called them, but not one of them would follow him, so well could they distinguish between his voice and that of their own shepherd.†] These curious customs, our Lord beautifully applies to his own management, as the great Shepherd of his church:—'The sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his sheep, he goeth before them; and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers.'‡

The shepherds in those, as in other pastoral regions, frequently devoted a part of their leisure hours to the study and practice of music. With the pipe or the harp, they endeavoured to beguile the listless hours of the noon-day; or, while they guarded the slumbering fold, the lonely watches of the night. The son of Jesse was, at an early period of life, renowned among the shepherds of Palestine for his exquisite skill in touching the harp. His superior abilities as a musician, procured him the dangerous honour of standing in the presence of Saul, and soothing his agitated mind into peace and comfort, with the ravishing tones of his

* Honourable J. E. Murray's Travels in the Pyrenees.
† Rev. J. Hartley's Researches in the Levant, p. 307.
‡ John x. 3, 4, 5.

favourite instrument. But his musical talents were often devoted to a nobler purpose, than allaying the distraction of a gloomy despot, or beguiling the lingering hours in the lonely wilderness ; they were employed in setting to music the inimitable lyrics, which, under the direction of the divine Spirit, he composed for the worship of his God, and in performing the sweet and solemn airs upon the harp. He invented several kinds of musical instruments, and improved others ; but the instrument in which he seems to have chiefly delighted, was the harp with ten strings ; of which number, it is probable, several were added by himself. It is a curious fact, that the Greek writers refer the invention of music to shepherds. Apollo, the inventor of the harp, according to some, tended for nine years the flocks of Admetus ; Pan, another shepherd, invented the lyre, and Mercury, the pipe ; both of whom were, in succeeding ages, adored as the deities who presided over pastoral affairs. In times long posterior to the age in which they flourished, the shepherds of the East were still renowned for their taste in poetry and music ; of which, the Idylls of Theocritus, and the Eclogues of Virgil, are permanent and incontestible proofs.* The pipe with six holes was more especially consecrated by the heathen to the service of their gods. On this instrument they played before the images of their deities.† To this idolatrous practice the prophet seems to refer :—' And the harp and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine are in their feasts.'‡ All those instruments were probably used in the same unholy worship.

The oriental shepherd and his family sometimes take up their abode in caves, with which the country, particularly about Askelon, abounds. These caverns are often so capacious, as to admit the master and his

* Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii. cap. 44, p. 461-465.
† Ovid. Fast. i. l. 11, and vi. l. 652.
‡ Isa. v. 12. Blunt, pp. 21, 444.

whole property. In times of imminent danger, the people forsake their towns and villages, and retire with their wives and children, their flocks and herds, into these dark recesses, which have been from time immemorial, the refuge of the oppressed. It was in these hiding places, that Baldwin I. king of Jerusalem, in the barbarous age of the crusades, found the inhabitants of many villages, with their flocks and their herds, who had favoured the cause of his enemies, and fled at his approach.* In Egypt such excavations appear to have been the settled abodes of a numerous and peaceful population. Dr Richardson entered several mountain defiles on his way to Nubia, where he found 'a number of excavations extremely well executed, covered with sculpture, and painted in the most brilliant colours; likewise a number of pits sunk perpendicularly into the rock, all of which have been used as burying places, and many of them still contain handsome mummy cases, made of wood and stone, beautifully painted in a variety of colours, and covered with curious devices.' But besides these, 'high up in the front, along the base of the mountain, and over the rocky flat, all the way from Medina Thabou, there are innumerable excavations, many of them large and beautifully formed, painted, and sculptured with many curious devices, illustrative of ancient customs. In one place above Medina Thabou, the doors into these excavations are so numerous and so contiguous, that they resemble a row of houses in a village. They have a long piazza in front, and a large apartment within; and a long shaft running back into the rock. They rise in tiers above each other, according to the different elevations of the mountain. They have evidently been dwelling-houses, and, from the shady piazza in front, the spectator enjoys the most delightful view that can possibly be obtained from the plain of Thebes.'† [A more

* Harmer's Obs. vol. i. p. 181.

† Richardson's Trav. vol. ii. pp. 64, 65. See another account of

apposite and interesting illustration of the habit of the eastern shepherds occasionally dwelling in caves of the rocks, is given by Mr Stephens, who, within these few years, made the tour of Palestine. 'We were climbing,' says he, 'up the side of a mountain, and saw on a little point on the very summit the figure of an Arab, who had just finished his devotions, and was sitting on the rock when we approached and found that he had literally been praying on his house-top, for his habitation was in the rock beneath. Like almost every old man one meets in the East, he looked exactly the patriarch of the imagination, and precisely as we would paint Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob. He rose as we approached, and gave us the usual Bedouin invitation to stop and pass the night with him; and leading us a few paces to the brink of the mountain, he showed us, in the valley below, the village of his tribe. The valley began at the foot of the elevation on which we stood, and lay between ranges of broken and overhanging rocks—a smooth and beautiful table of green, for perhaps a quarter of a mile, and beyond that distance broke off and expanded into an extensive meadow. The whole of this valley, down to the meadow, was filled with flocks of sheep and goats. But where were the dwellings of the shepherds? In Egypt I had seen the Arabs living in the tombs, and among the ruins of temples; in the desert I had seen them dwelling in tents; but I had never yet seen them making their habitations in the rude crevices of the rocks; such, however, were their habitations here. The rocks, in many places, were overhanging; in others, there were chasms or fissures; and wherever there was any

the excavations near Thebes, pp. 73, 74. See also Diodorus Sicul. lib. i. p. 43; and Strabo, lib. xvii. p. 816. In Hindostan, too, the fainting inhabitants are forced to escape from the severe fervours of an eastern moon, into vast artificial caverns, and into grottoes of the most refreshing coolness, which the great and the wealthy cause to be constructed in their gardens.—*Maurice's Indian Antiq.* vol. i. pp. 59, 73.

thing that could afford a partial protection from the weather on one side, a low rough circular wall of stone was built in front of it, and formed the abode of the whole family. Within the small enclosure in front, the women were sitting winnowing or grinding corn, or rather pounding or rubbing it, between two stones, in the same primitive manner practised of old in the days of the patriarchs. The habitations in the crevices of the rocks, bad as they would be considered any where else, I found much more comfortable than most of the huts of the Egyptians on the banks of the Nile. It was not sheer poverty that drove these shepherds to take shelter in the rocks, for they were a tribe more than three hundred strong, and had flocks and herds such as are seldom found among the Bedouins.*]

The Egyptian shepherds lived in booths, constructed of reeds which lined the margin of their venerated river.† But the most common abode of the Syrian shepherd is the tent. From the permanency of their customs, it is reasonable to suppose that it was made in the same manner as the common Arab tents, which have only a pole or two to support them in the middle, and a single covering of black hair-cloth, which, though mean and coarse, effectually repels the rain and the dew.‡ These the Arabians call *kymas*, from kama, he pitched a tent, because of the shelter they afford; and *beet el shaar*, houses of hair, from the materials, or webs of goats' hair, of which they are made.§

* Stephen's Incidents of Travel.

† Diodorus Sicul. lib. i. cap. 43.

‡ Volney's Trav. vol. i. p. 279. They are of the same colours in Persia.—*Kinneir's Geog. Mem.* &c. p. 139. See also Niebuhr's Travels in Arabia, vol. i. p. 209; Dr Richardson's Trav. vol. ii. p. 195; and Buckingham's Trav. vol. ii. p. 52. Sometimes the hair-cloth is striped black and white, and often brown.

§ The hair-cloth is chosen for the purpose of excluding the rain and dew. This hair-cloth is spun and woven by the women; it is very strong, of a close texture, and so stretched, that the longest and heaviest wet cannot penetrate.—*D'Arvieux Trav.* The tents of Kedar are woven of goat's hair, mixed with that of the camel.—*Vere Monro.—Editor.*

The Arabian tents are 'of an oblong figure, not unlike the bottom of a ship turned upside down, supported, according to their size, some with one pillar, others with two or three, which are eight or ten feet high, and three or four feet in thickness, whilst a curtain or carpet, occasionally let down from each of these divisions, turns the whole into so many separate apartments. These tents are kept firm and steady, by bracing, or stretching down their eaves with cords, tied to hooked wooden pins, well pointed, which they drive into the ground with a mallet;* one of these pins answering to the nail, as the mallet does to the hammer, which Jael used in fastening to the ground the temples of Sisera.'† In these homely dwellings, the Arabian shepherds and their families, wrapping themselves up in their hykes, repose upon the bare ground, or with only a mat or carpet beneath them, wherever they can find a place unoccupied. Those, indeed, who are married, have each of them a portion of the tent to themselves, separated by a curtain; and, in remote times, women of distinction had a tent for their own use.‡ [In these oblong tents, the separate apartment occupied by the women generally opens by an entrance from without, in a line parallel to that occupied by the other. The curtain which divides it, thus makes as it were two perfectly distinct chambers, which must be approached by different doors, and which have neither any shaded porch or door before them, nor any apartment behind; and, consequently, this construction does not seem to answer so well to the account given by Moses of Abraham's habitation, as the tents in use among the Turco-

* The use of these wooden pins, however, has sometimes to be dispensed with, and other expedients adopted. 'The erection of our tent,' says Mr Monro, 'was not unattended with difficulty, for the rocky nature of the soil made it impossible to drive the pegs, and we were obliged to make fast the cords to large stones, which were plentiful around.'—*Editor.*

† Judges iv. 21. Shaw's Travels.

‡ Shaw's Travels, vol. i. pp. 398, 399.

mans, which differ considerably from those of the pastoral tribes of Arabia, as we learn from a description given by Buckingham of a chief's, in which that gentleman enjoyed the rites of hospitality. 'The tent occupied a space of about thirty feet square, and was formed by one large awning, supported by twenty-four small poles, in four rows of six each, the ends of the awning being drawn out by cords fastened to pins in the ground. Each of these poles giving a pointed form to the part of the awning which it supported, the outside looked like a number of umbrella tops, or small Chinese spires. The half of this square was open in front, and at the sides, having two rows of poles clear, and the third was closed by a reeded partition, behind which was the apartment for the females. The form of Abraham's tent, as thus described, seems to have been exactly like the one in which we sit, for in both there was a shaded open front, in which he could sit in the heat of the day, and yet be seen from afar off; and the apartment of the females, where Sarah was, when he stated her to be within the tent, was immediately behind this, wherein she prepared the meal for the guests, and from whence she listened to the prophetic declaration.'* These particulars afford a literal comment on the words of Moses:—'And Abraham sat in the tent door in the heat of the day.† Abraham hastened *into* the tent unto Sarah. Sarah heard the words of the angel in the tent door *behind* him.'‡ When a shepherd's family increases, so that the wonted accommodation in the tent is insufficient to contain them, or when a more than ordinary concourse of people is expected, a simple expedient is adopted to procure the requisite lodging. The canvass of which the tent is formed being stretched out to its full extent, and the pegs being shifted a few paces farther back on the ground, a small addition is made to the length of the cords, which are then fastened to the pegs as before,

* Buckingham's Trav. † Genesis xviii. 1. ‡ Genesis xviii. 6, 10.

and the tent is enlarged; but as, in such a change, there is an increase of pressure or weight upon the pins, the old ones need to be removed, and their places supplied by stakes of greater length and thickness. To this simple method of providing for the reception of increasing numbers, allusion is made by the prophet:—'Enlarge the place of thy tent; and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes.'* When the old dispensation should have closed, and the fulness of time have come, the boundaries of the church, till then, limited to the narrow confines of Judea, were to be greatly extended; and the accommodation necessary for the vast multitudes who, in the gentile world, should become subjects of the kingdom of grace, is pointed out under this very intelligible though figurative reference to the ordinary mode of enlarging a shepherd's tent.] Curtains, curiously adorned by the women with needle work, are suspended over the doors of the tents occupied by their chiefs and princes. This may perhaps account for the superior style in which the hanging for the door of the tabernacle was finished:—'And thou shalt make an hanging for the door of the tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needle work.'† It was the habitation of the God and King of Israel.

Besides the mats and coverlids of the common Arab tents, La Roque mentions several domestic utensils, among which are hair sacks, and trunks, and baskets, covered with skin, in which they packed their kettles or pots, great wooden bowls, hand mills, and pitchers.‡

* Isaiah liv. 2.

† Exod. xxvi. 36. Morier's Trav. vol. i. p. 250.

‡ Voy. dans la Palest. pp. 176, 178. The following is the account of the furniture of an Arab tent, as given by a recent English traveller. 'A couple of copper-boilers, two small grinding stones, a leather bag to churn milk in, some water skins, a wooden bowl, a goblet or two of tin, or horn, a mat, or sometimes a coffee pot, are all the earthly possessions of a Bedouin.'—*Madden's Travels*, vol. ii. p. 192.—*Editor.*

These are all the articles of household furniture they commonly need, or desire, and they are generally hung upon the poles that support the tent, and which are full of hooks for the purpose.* This account seems to explain, in a clearer manner than commentators have done, the passages where the furniture which the people of Israel used in the wilderness, is described :— ‘ Upon whatsoever any of them, when they are dead, doth fall, it shall be unclean; whether it be any vessel of wood,’ that is, their wooden bowls, ‘ or raiment, or skin,’ which was used in covering their trunks or baskets, ‘ or sack,’ made of hair-cloth, for any domestic purpose: ‘ whatsoever vessel it be, wherein any work is done, it must be put into water, and it shall be unclean until the evening; so it shall be cleansed. And every earthen vessel (or pitcher, for holding liquids, and drinking out of) whereinto any of them falls, whatsoever is in it, shall be unclean, and ye shall break it.’†

But, although the bowls and dishes of the vulgar Arabs are of wood, those belonging to their chiefs are not unfrequently of copper, neatly tinned.‡ Mr Harmer supposes, that the vessel in which Jael, the wife of Heber, presented the butter-milk to Sisera, which Deborah, in her song, calls a lordly dish, or, literally, a dish of nobles, was of this sort. Her husband certainly was an Arabian emir or chieftian, of great distinction, in whose tents we might expect to find vessels of a superior kind; the working of metals dates its commencement long before her time; and the mere size of the vessel could hardly be the thing intended, for it does not appear that the chieftain of the East drank out of larger vessels than the meanest of his retinue. But it is more probable that Jael’s lordly dish was a large bason of wood, which, even in modern

* In the apocryphal book of Judeth, Holofernes is described as hanging his falchion upon the pillar or pole of his tent.—*Editor.*

† Lev xi. 32, 33.

‡ Voy. dans la Palest. p. 178. Niebuhr’s Arabia, vol. i. p. 209.

times, is often presented on the table of Arabian emirs, and accords better with that simple mode of living for which the Kenites were so distinguished. It was quite natural to present such a bason of milk to the exhausted fugitive; and besides, we learn from the conduct of Joseph to his brother Benjamin, that a large portion was given as a mark of love and respect; which the wife of Heber certainly pretended to feel for Sisera on that occasion.*

The bottle is another necessary utensil in the tent of Arabian shepherds. It holds their water and other liquids, and is frequently used as a pitcher.† The eastern bottle is made of a goat or kid skin, stripped off, without opening the belly; the apertures made by cutting off the tail and legs are sewed up, and when filled, it is tied about the neck.‡ The Arabs and Persians never go a journey without a small leathern bottle of water hanging by their side like a scrip. § These skin bottles preserve their water, milk, and other liquids, in a fresher state than any other vessels they can use.‖ The people of the East, indeed, put into them every thing they mean to carry to a distance, whether dry or liquid, and very rarely make use of boxes and pots, unless to preserve such things as are liable to be broken.¶

* Harmer's Observ. vol. i. pp. 216, 217.

† Forbes's Orient. Mem. vol. ii. p. 140.

‡ Harmer's Observ. vol. i. p. 219.

§ Buckingham, in his journey from Jerusalem, carried a leathern bottle of water suspended from his saddle, and all his party were equipped in the same manner.—*Trav.* vol. ii. p. 51. The large bottles, carried on camels and for journeys, are made of the skins of goats; the smaller, carried about by footmen, are made of the skins of kids.

‖ Before they become so serviceable, however, as is described in the text, they required to be kept full of water for a considerable length of time, which must be changed every day, in order to extract the strong taste of the leather.—*See Robinson, Bib. Resear.* vi. 49. Moreover, in very hot weather, they often require to be oiled, to prevent them from bursting. Captain Burnes describes the grease as melted through the influence of the sun, and mixing with the water within, rendered some water he carried through the desert so nauseous, that even the cattle would not drink it.—*Burnes' Bokhara.—Editor.*

¶ Niebuhr's Arabia, vol. i. p. 209. See also Odyssey, lib. ii. l. 380.

They enclose these leathern bottles in woollen sacks, because their beasts of carriage often fall down under their load, or cast it down on the sandy desert. This method of transporting the necessaries of life has another advantage; the skin bottles preserve them fresher; defend them against the ants and other insects, which cannot penetrate the skin; and prevent the dust, of which immense quantities are constantly moving about in the arid regions of Asia, and so fine that no coffer is impenetrable to it, from reaching them. It is for these reasons that provisions of every kind are enclosed in vessels made of the skins of these animals. The conjecture, therefore, is highly probable, that not only the balm and the honey, which are somewhat liquid, but also the nuts and almonds, which were sent as a present to Joseph from Canaan, were enclosed in little vessels of kid skins, that they might be preserved fresh; and to defend them against injuries, from the restiveness of the camels or asses, or other accidents, the whole were enclosed in woollen sacks. This custom has descended to the present times; for fruits and provisions of every kind are still commonly packed up in skins, by the inhabitants of Syria.*

To those goat-skins vessels, the Psalmist refers in

* Harmer's Observations, vol. i. p. 221, note by Dr Clarke. These skin bottles were not confined to the countries of Asia; the roving tribes, which passed the Hellespont soon after the deluge, and settled in Greece and Italy, probably introduced them into these countries. We learn from Homer, that they were in common use among the Greeks at the siege of Troy; for, with a view to an accommodation between the hostile armies, the heralds carried through the city the things which were necessary to ratify the compact, two lambs, and exhilarating wine, the fruit of the earth, in a bottle of goat skin:

Αρνε δυω και οινον ευφρονα, καρπον αρουρης
Ασκω εν αιγειω.

Il. lib. iii. l. 246.—*Ody.* lib. vi. l. 77, 78.

At the feast of Bacchus, it was the custom of the Romans to dance upon bottles of goat skin, blown up like bladders, and besmeared with oil, which were placed in the fields for that purpose:

——'atque inter pocula læti
Mollibus in pratis unctos saliere per utres.'—*Vir.* 2 Geor. l. 363.

this complaint, 'I am become as a bottle in the smoke.'* My appearance in the state of my exile, is as different from what it was when I dwelt at court, as are the gold and silver vessels of a palace from the smoky skin bottle of a poor Arab's tent, where I am now compelled to reside. Not less emphatical is the lamentation of the prophet, that the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, or to vessels fabricated of that precious metal, were considered as no better than earthen pitchers, the work of the potter.

The holy Psalmist compares himself to a bottle in the smoke; which is a convertible phrase with a bottle in the tent of an Arab; because, when fires are lighted in it, the smoke instantly fills every part, and greatly incommodes the tenant. Nor will this appear surprising, when it is considered that an Arabian tent has no chimney or aperture but the door, from which the smoke can escape. The inspired writer, therefore, seems to allude to the meanness of a skin bottle, to its blackness, from the smoke of the tent in which it is placed, and to its dried and shrivelled appearance. And a most natural image it was for him to use, driven from the vessels of silver and gold in the palace of Saul, to quench his thirst with the wandering Arabs, from a smutted bottle of goat skin.†

These bottles are liable to be rent, when old or much used, and at the same time capable of being repaired. In the book of Joshua we are informed, the Gibeonites 'took wine bottles, old and rent, and bound up.'‡ This is perfectly according to the custom of the East; and the manner in which they mend their old and rent bottles is various. 'Sometimes they set in a piece; sometimes they gather up the wounded place in the manner of a purse; sometimes they put in a round flat piece of wood, and by that means stop the hole.'§

[Moreover, the liability of skin bottles to rend, will

* Psa. cxix. 83.
† Harmer's Observ. vol. i. p. 221.
‡ Josh. ix. 4.
§ Chardin's MS. vol. vi.

explain a simile used in one of our Lord's discourses—'Neither do men put new wine into old bottles; else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.'* Being made of the raw hide, they are, when new, capable of distending, and accommodating themselves, as it were, to the swelling of the liquor as it ferments. But when they have been once stretched out by the pressure of fermentation, and have become old, and shrivelled through use, they do not admit of any farther enlargement, and will consequently give way, if new wine is poured into them. Nay, when the wine is more than usually rich, even new bottles have sometimes difficulty enough in resisting its strength. 'Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles.'† These are the words of Elihu, who, while Job and his three friends were alternately chiding and answering each other's arguments, had sat silently listening to their discourse, and engaged in profound reflection on the subject. His thoughts had become full to overflowing; it was with the greatest pain and uneasiness he had restrained himself from interrupting the speaker at an earlier period, so that he begged the liberty to deliver his sentiments, as a real relief in the present state of his mind, which was as much on the rack, with the variety and weight of the matter that flowed upon him, as a new bottle, that has put forth its utmost capacity of enlargement, is ready to burst, through the force of the fermenting liquor it contains. That skin bottles were employed for the purpose of holding wine, appears still farther from a passage in the prophecies of Jeremiah, where, predicting the miseries that impended over Israel, he told them, that as the bottle was fitted to hold wine, so their sins had made them vessels of wrath, fitted for the judgments of God.‡ 'Thus saith the Lord God, Every bottle shall be filled with wine; and

* Matt. ix. 17. † Job xxxii. 19. ‡ Scott's Commentary.

they shall say unto thee, Do we not certainly know that every bottle shall be filled with wine?'*

Such are the few and simple articles of furniture with which the tents of oriental shepherds are stocked. They are quite in harmony with the humble and artless style of the tenement itself, to which they belong, which, being intended chiefly to serve the purpose of a screen from the heat of day, and a shelter from the nocturnal dews, is as light and fragile a habitation as can be imagined. Its erection is the work of a few minutes; for no sooner has a suitable spot been fixed upon for a halting-place, than the women, on whom that duty is principally devolved, hastily unpacking the sacks in which the haircloth and its appurtenances are folded, address themselves to the task of setting up the perpendicular pole which forms the centre of the house. Another runs to mark out the circumference or leading points of the ground which it is to cover; while a third party stands ready to spread out the canopy, and tie its extremities to the wooden pins, which the hands

* This practice of keeping wine in bottles of skin is still common in the East, as appears from the testimony of a modern traveller, whose words, as affording a perfect comment on the passages quoted above, we shall give at large:—'Bottles made of goat skins,' says he, 'are commonly employed; but those, who have to store wine in large quantities, employ ox skins. Stores of wine are in general kept secret in Mahommedan countries. But at Tiffles, the capital of Georgia, where the christian religion is professed, and where this restraint does not operate, the present writer seldom passed the wine-stores, without pausing to look at the remarkable display which they offered, and which called to mind the various passages of Scripture, in which a reference is contained to wine bottles of skin. The wine was generally contained in large ox skins, ranged around the storeroom, and quite distended with liquor. The larger skins seemed to answer to casks; the smaller to goat and kid skins, appearing as barrels and kegs in comparison, and they were chiefly used in conveying to customers the quantities they required; for individuals rarely keep large stocks of wines in their houses, but obtain a small supply of a skin or two from the store. This seems to have been the case among the Jews; for Nehemiah, although holding the rank of governor, had no store of wine, as we read that he had a fresh supply every "ten days;" Neh. v. 18.'—Quoted from *Eastern Arts and Antiq.* p. 86.—*Editor.*

of a fourth, with a huge mallet, have just driven into the earth ; and thus the business of preparing the new habitation is completed. It is not easy to imagine what a beautiful and enlivening spectacle the appearance of tents presents. Ranged in the most orderly manner, sometimes in the form of a square, sometimes in that of a crescent, more generally in that of a circle, with the entrances of each pointing to the residence of the sheich, which is conspicuous in the centre by its flag, as well as by its superior elegance and dimensions, an encampment of some hundreds occupies a considerable space of ground, while the beasts of burden, picqueted close by, eating their chopped straw, barley, and beans, and the myriads of sheep and goats that are spread far and wide over the adjoining plains, form one of the most captivating pictures of primitive simplicity and peace, which the eye can light upon.* With no less ease and expedition is a removal effected. When a party finds it necessary or convenient to shift to fresh quarters, early in the morning they are astir, and busy with the work of preparing for departure. The men are seen engaged in milking the females of the flock, and undoing the ropes that are fastened to the knee-joints of the camels and goats over night; while the women, taking their usual charge of the household matters, pull up the pegs, untie the stenting cords, furl the tent, and bundling up both it and their domestic utensils in the large sacks that are kept for the purpose, pack them on the patient camels, who advance in succession, and kneeling down to receive each his share of the burden, prepare to act their well known part in the general movement. During this operation of dismantling, little ceremony is shown towards those

* Horses are tied by the forefoot to one of the stakes or pins of the tent ropes. It was exactly in this way that the Syrian army, in the time of Elisha, had secured their beasts of burden, when they were panic-struck, and fled, leaving the horses and asses tied, and the tents standing as they had been occupied ; 2 Kings vii. 10.—*Editor.*

that happen to be within, as the half of the work is sometimes completed before the children and other inmates are well roused from their slumbers. But their simple toilet can be made in the open air, as well as beneath the cover of a tent; and while a few moments after find the motley cavalcade in motion, not a vestige can be seen, not a memorial is left, to tell the tale that that spot was ever the abode of men, the scene of busy occupation, the centre of domestic sympathies and enjoyment. 'There is something very melancholy,' says a late intelligent traveller, 'in our morning flittings. The pins are plucked up, and in a few moments, a dozen holes, a heap or two of ashes, and the marks of the camels' knees in the sand, soon to be totally obliterated, are the only traces of what has been for a while our home.'* The sacred writers frequently avail themselves of this familiar scene in pastoral life, for the purpose of giving impressive views of the transitory nature of the present life. Thus Isaiah, 'Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent;' or, as the words may be more literally and graphically rendered, 'My habitation (*i. e.* my life) is departed from me, rolled up as a shepherd's tent.'† But a still more beautiful and affecting allusion to such frail and briefly-enduring enjoyments, is made by the Apostle Paul, in that well known passage, 'We know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'‡ How striking is the comparison made in this elegant metaphor, between a fleeting and an eternal life,—between man in this world, constantly advancing from one stage to another, and man in that future scene of his existence, where all things will be stationary and permanent; and to the Christian, what is better calculated to raise

* Lord Lindsay's Trav. vol. i. p. 305.
† Isaiah xxxviii. 12. ‡ 2 Cor. v. 1.

his mind above the concerns,—what is more admirably fitted to preserve him from being affected by the changes and the trials, of this evanescent life, than the prospect which faith holds out to him, of a house not made with hands, enduring in the heavens!]

The shepherds are not the only class of people that live in tents; many orientals forsake their villages at the approach of summer, for the more airy and refreshing shelter which they afford. This custom, which may be traced to an antiquity very remote, explains, in the most satisfactory manner, an incident in the history of Jacob. When the patriarch, in consequence of a divine admonition, had formed the resolution to return from Mesopotamia to his father's house, he sent for Rachel and Leah to his flocks, and there informed them of his design; and, on their consenting to go with him, he set out upon his journey, so silently, that Laban had no notice of it till the third day after his departure. It appears, however, that he carried all his effects with him, and tents for the accommodation of his family; and that Laban, who pursued him, had tents also for the use of his followers. The reason is, it was the time of sheep-shearing, when the masters and all their retainers commonly lived under tents in the open fields; and had the greater part, if not the whole of their furniture with them, on account of the entertainments which were given on these joyful occasions. Thus was Jacob equipped at once for his journey, and Laban for the pursuit. It is not more difficult to account for the intelligence not reaching Laban till the third day after Jacob's escape. Laban's flocks were in two divisions—one under the care of Jacob; the other committed to the care of Laban's sons, at the distance of three days' journey; and Jacob's own flock, under the management of his family, were, probably for the same reason, at an equal distance. Beside this, there might be other circumstances which retarded the progress of the messenger, which the sa-

cred historian did not think it necessary to state ; the fact is certain, and all the incidents of the story are natural and easy.

The custom of living in tents was not confined to people in the country : persons of distinction often retired from the towns into the fields, and lived under tents during the heats of summer. Tahmasp, a Persian monarch, used to spend the winter at Casbin, and to retire in the summer three or four leagues into the country, where he lived in tents at the foot of mount Alouvent, a place famed for its cool and pleasant retreats.* His successors acted in the same manner, till the time of Abbas the Great, who removed his court to Ispahan.

Entertainments are frequently given in the country under tents, which, by the variety of their colours, and the peculiar manner in which they are sometimes pitched, make a very pleasant appearance. To this agreeable custom, the spouse probably alludes, in that description of her person :—'I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem ; as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.'† The seeming contradiction in the first clause, is easily obviated. The Arabs generally make use of tents covered with black haircloth ; the other nations around them live in booths, or huts, constructed of reeds and boughs, or other materials, or in tents of different colours. In Palestine, the Turcomans live in tents of white linen cloth ; while the Turks, in their encampments, prefer green or red, which have a very pleasing effect in the eye of the traveller.'‡ It is only the Arabian tents, or the tents

* Harmer's Observ. vol. i. p. 219. † Song i. 5.

‡ D'Arvieux Voy. dans la Palest. pp. 99, 100, 173. Pococke's Trav. vol. ii. pp. 115, 146. Chardin's Trav. p. 382. Harmer's Observ. vol. i. pp. 236, 237. A recent traveller last year fell in with a caravan of Turks making the pilgrimage to Mecca, the appearance of which he thus describes, 'Hundreds upon hundreds of tents and pavilions of different colours glistened in the sun.'—*Wilde*, vol. i. p. 306.—*Editor.*

of Kedar, which are uniformly black or striped. This is the reason the spouse compares herself, not to tents in general, which are of different colours, but to those of Kedar, which are all covered with black hair-cloth, and have therefore a disagreeable appearance. These tents are stretched on three or four picquets, only five or six feet high, which gives them a very flat appearance : at a distance, one of these camps seems only like a number of black spots.*

To be black, but comely, involves no contradiction ; for it is certain that the face may be discoloured by the sun, to the influence of which the spouse positively ascribes her sable hue, and yet possess an exquisite gracefulness. The Arab women, whom Mr Wood saw among the ruins of Palmyra, were well shaped ; and, although very swarthy, yet had good features. Zenobia, the celebrated queen of that renowned city, was reckoned eminently beautiful ; and the description we have of her person, answers to that character ; her complexion of a dark brown (the necessary effect of her way of life in that burning climate),—her eyes black and sparkling, and of an uncommon fire—her countenance animated and sprightly in a very high degree—her person graceful and genteel beyond imagination—her teeth white as pearl—her voice clear and strong.† Such is the picture which historians have drawn of the beautiful and unfortunate Zenobia ; from whence it appears, that a person may be both black and comely ; and, by consequence, that the description of Solomon, which certainly refers to the moral and religious state and character of the genuine worshipper of Jehovah, is neither incongruous nor exaggerated, but perfectly agreeable to nature.

In this case, however, the duskiness of complexion was not natural, but the consequence of exposure to the rays of the sun ; for the spouse anticipates the surprise which the daughters of Jerusalem would feel

* Volney's Trav. vol. i. p. 279. † Ruins of Palmyra, p. 37.

when they beheld her countenance :—'Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me.' Females of distinction in Palestine, and even in Mesopotamia, are not only beautiful and well-shaped, but, in consequence of being always kept from the rays of the sun, are very fair. This fact is attested by D'Arvieux, who was favoured with a sight of several Arabian ladies of high rank.* It is not unworthy of notice, that the Scripture bears the same testimony concerning the complexion of Sarah, of Rebecca, and of Rachel; they were 'beautiful and well favoured.' But the women in general are extremely brown and swarthy in the complexion; although there are not a few of exquisite beauty in these torrid regions, especially among those who are less exposed to the heat of the sun. It is, on this account, that the prophet Jeremiah, when he would describe a beautiful woman, represents her as one that keeps at home: because those, who are desirous to preserve their beauty, go very little abroad.

The spouse proceeds, 'As the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.' By the last clause may be understood those splendid tents, to which that great monarch, who, by his own confession, denied himself no earthly pleasure, retired in the heats of summer, or when he wished to entertain his nobles and courtiers, or sought the amusement of the chase. Some are of opinion, these curtains refer to the sumptuous hangings which surrounded the bed of the Israelitish king: and their idea receives some countenance from a manuscript note of Dr Russel's, which states, that Mosquitto curtains are sometimes suspended over the beds in Syria and Palestine.† But, since it is common in Hebrew poetry to express nearly the same thought in the second parallel line as in the first, and since it is equally common in Scripture to put a part for the whole, it is more

* Voy. dans la Palest. p. 214; and Russel's Hist. vol. i. p. 99.

† Russel's Hist. vol. i. p. 144. Harmer's Observ. vol. i. p. 238, note by Dr Clarke.

natural to suppose that the tents of Solomon are actually meant in this passage; and as we are sure they were extremely magnificent, they might with great propriety be introduced here, on account of their beauty. [This view is supported by the well known circumstance, that the tents in which the modern princes of the East often spend the summer, are got up in a style of surpassing beauty and magnificence. Chardin describes one belonging to the late king of Persia :—'It cost two millions; it was called the house of gold, because gold glittered every where about it; and there was an inscription wrought upon the cornice of the antechamber, which gave it the appellation of the throne of the second Solomon.' If such tents, as may be reasonably supposed, were in use among contemporary monarchs and the nobles of Israel in the age of David, what an amiable trait is afforded us of his high-toned piety, and what an emphatic contrast is conveyed by that passage of his sacred compositions, where he says, 'I had rather be a door-keeper in the house (tabernacle) of God, than to dwell in the' most magnificent and luxurious 'tents of wickedness.'*

[But it is not merely princes and great people, who regale themselves under the canopy of splendid pavilions; the whole population of eastern towns, in hot seasons, often exchange their close and pent-up habitations, for the delightful and refreshing coolness of tents erected in the fields. Dr Pococke informs us, he found a *summer village* occupied by people whose huts were made of a collection of reeds and boughs, while their winter houses were at a considerable distance on the other side of a hill. He elsewhere mentions his falling in with another village of towns-people, who were living in tents.† It is not at all wonderful, then, when we read of Ezra and his exiled countrymen, in their route from Babylon to Jerusalem, taking up their abode in tents for three days; and it may assist us in

* Psalm lxxxiv. 10. † Travels, vol. ii. p. 158.

forming an idea of their encampment, to subjoin the following description, given by a modern writer, of a scene he had the good fortune to witness, which seems to bear a striking resemblance to that of the sacred story :—'The whole valley was covered with the tents of the pilgrims, whose several encampments, according to their towns or districts, were placed a little apart, each *under its own particular standard.* Their cattle were grazing about, and the people who attended them were in their primitive eastern garbs.' The happy pilgrims, who were on their return to Jerusalem, under the conduct of Ezra, were in like manner arranged in their encampment, each tribe under its respective standard ; and if even their diminished numbers must have exhibited a beautiful spectacle, when their tents were spread out, in the utmost regularity, under their different banners, how indescribably magnificent, in extent, order, and variety, would the scene be, when, in the various stages from Egypt to Canaan, the whole population of the Hebrews, with their tabernacle, like the tent of oriental chiefs in the centre, covered a space of ground, as Jewish writers assert, about twelve miles in circumference ! No wonder that Balaam, enchanted with the widely extended and glorious prospect, burst forth into this exclamation,—"How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob ! and thy tabernacles, O Israel ! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign-aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar-trees beside the waters." "*]

The oriental shepherds, when unprovided with tents, erect huts or booths of loose stones, covered with reeds and boughs. Pococke found, in the neighbourhood of Acre, some open huts, made of boughs raised about three feet from the ground, inhabited by Arabs.† In such booths, many of the people of Israel were obliged to take shelter in the wilderness, from the want of a

* Numbers xxiv. 5, 6. † Trav. vol. ii. p. 158.

sufficient number of tents ; the remembrance of which they were commanded to preserve by a solemn festival. But even these meaner and more inconvenient habitations are not always within the reach of an Arabian shepherd ; he is often obliged to take refuge under the projecting rock, and to sleep in the open air. A grove or woodland occasionally furnishes a most agreeable retreat. The description, which Chandler has left us of one of these stations, is so strikingly picturesque, that it must be given in his own words :—'About two in the morning, our whole attention was fixed by the barking of dogs, which, as we advanced, became exceeding furious. Deceived by the light of the moon, we now fancied we could see a village, and were much mortified to find only a station of poor goat-herds, without even a shed, and nothing for our horses to eat. They were lying, wrapped in their thick capotes or loose coats, by some glimmering embers among the bushes in a dale, under a spreading tree by the fold. They received us hospitably, heaping on fresh fuel, and producing sour curds and coarse bread, which they toasted for us on the coals. We made a scanty meal, sitting on the ground, lighted by the fire and by the moon ; after which, sleep suddenly overpowered me. On waking, I found my two companions by my side, sharing in the comfortable cover of the janizary's cloak, which he had carefully spread over us. I was now much struck with the wild appearance of the spot. The tree was hung with rustic utensils ; the she-goats in a pen, sneezed, and bleated, and rustled to and fro ; the shrubs by which our horses stood were leafless, and the earth bare ; a black cauldron with milk was simmering over the fire ; and a figure, more than gaunt or savage, close by us, struggling on the ground with a kid, whose ears he had slit, and was endeavouring to cauterize with a red hot iron.' This description forms a striking comment on a passage in Ezekiel, in which God condescends to give this promise to his people :—'I

will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land ; and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.'* No reasonable doubt can be entertained that they were often exposed in the same manner, while tending their flocks; and in great danger when their country, from the thinness of the population or other causes, happened to be overrun with beasts of prey. They are, accordingly, cheered with the sure prospect of those ravenous animals being exterminated, and every woodland becoming a place of safety to the slumbering shepherd.

In the time of Chandler, it was still the custom of eastern shepherds to sit at the door of their tents in the heat of the day. That traveller, ' at ten minutes after ten in the morning,' was entertained with the view of a plain full of booths, with the Turcomans sitting by their doors, under sheds resembling porticoes, or by shady trees, surrounded with flocks of goats.† In the same situation the three angels found Abraham, when they came to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, sitting under the portico or skirts of his tent, near the door, to enjoy the refreshing breeze, and superintend his servants. It was not the hottest part of the day when Chandler saw the Turcoman shepherds sitting at the doors of their booth; it was soon after ten in the morning ; and when Abraham was sitting at his tent door, it might be nearly at the same hour. In the hottest part of the day, according to the practice of those countries, the patriarch had retired to rest.‡

* Ezek. xxxiv. 25. Chandler's Trav. p. 157. † Ib. pp. 180, 181.

‡ About the same time of the day, Buckingham tells us, that, in his journey from Aleppo to the Euphrates, he found Sheich Ramadam sitting beneath the awning in front of his tent; and, indeed, the practice is quite common among the pastoral chiefs of the East. In observing the time for so retiring, they are guided by the progress of the sun. People who, like these, are constantly in the open air, and diligent observers of the motions of the heavenly bodies, soon fix in their minds the arch of the sky the sun must reach at any given part of the day, and regulate their movements as unerringly as if they used the most faithful time-piece.

The goats of the Turcomans were feeding around their huts; and if Abraham's cattle, which is extremely probable, were feeding around his tent in the same manner, it accounts for the expedition with which he ran and fetched a calf from the herd, in order to entertain his visitants.

In winter, the Arabians and their cattle lodge together; on this account they encamp in valleys, or on the sea-shore upon the sand, in order to avoid the inconvenience of mire: but the emirs, or princes, live in a very different way; they have always two tents, one for themselves, and the other for their wives, besides a number of small ones for their domestics, together with a tent of audience.* In the same style of rustic magnificence, the patriarchs seemed to have lived; for Abraham and Sarah occupied separate tents, as did Isaac and Rebecca; and from them, it is probable, the custom descended to the Arabian shepherds of modern times.

In summer the flocks were enclosed in folds, to which allusion is frequently made in the sacred volume. The fold of Polyphemus, the far-famed Sicilian shepherd, was a spacious cave, where his cattle, his sheep, and goats reposed.† In Persia, the shepherds frequently drive their flocks into caverns at night, and enclose them by heaping up walls of loose stones.‡ But the more common sheepfold was an enclosure in the manner of a building, and constructed of stone and hurdles, or fenced with reeds.§ It had a large door or entrance for admitting the flock, which was closed with hurdles; and, to facilitate the tithing, which was done in the fold, they struck out a little door, so small that two lambs could not escape together. To this entrance, which is still used in the East, our Lord alludes in this declaration:—'He that entereth not by the door into the

* D'Arvieux Voy. dans la Palest. p. 75. † Odyss. lib. ix. l. 185.
‡ Morier's Trav. vol. i. p. 61. § Varro de Re Rust. lib. ii. c. 2.

sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.'*

To remove the impurities, which the wool might have contracted in the course of the year in the sandy deserts, it was the custom in those countries, as in our own, to wash their flocks in the standing pool or flowing stream. But in what manner they accomplished this necessary operation, whether by the hand of the shepherd, or by leaping the sheep from the brow of a rock into the pool below, does not certainly appear.†

Sheep-washing is only once mentioned in Scripture; the passage occurs in the Song of Solomon, and is thus

* John, x. 1. Another cause may be assigned for this mode of constructing sheep-folds or sheep-cotes. Those sheep cotes or folds, to which allusion is made by the prophet Nathan, as being well known in his day (1 Chron. xvii. 7), are used chiefly by shepherds whose flocks are pasturing in the neighbourhood of populous towns, where they are liable to the stolen visits of the midnight plunderer, or of places known to be infested by wolves and other beasts of prey. In the open country, and in remote and extensive plains, the Nomade tribes allow their flocks to wander at large all night, without being collected into any place of security. When it is found necessary to resort to this precaution, the enclosures erected are generally of a very rude and simple construction, consisting of a square or circular parapet of mud or of loose stones, or a fence of reeds sufficient to prevent them from straying, and being amissing among the brush-wood. At other times, when the character of the country is loose and dangerous, these folds are of a more solid and enduring kind; the walls are high, thick, and strongly built, often presenting the appearance of a small fortress, into which, in cases of great danger, not the cattle only, but the families of the shepherds are lodged. In these structures there is only one door, the key of which is kept most sacredly by the owner himself, or persons in his confidence, so that he alone, or those accompanying him, can be admitted by that regular entrance, while the thief and robber climbeth up some other way. An additional reason for enclosing sheep at shearing-time in walled cotes, is assigned by some travellers, who tell us, that oriental shepherds suppose that the perspiration and evaporation, which are the consequences of being crowded together, improve the quality of the wool.—*Editor.*

† The direction of Virgil to the shepherds of Italy seems to favour the last method:—

'Dulcibus idcirco fluviis pecus omne magistri,' &c.—*Geor.* iii. 1. 445.

On this account, the shepherds drench the whole flock in sweet rivers, and the ram, with humid fleece, is plunged in the pool, and sent to float along the stream.

translated :—'Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which come up from the washing.' The embrowned fleece is taken off; every speck of impurity is washed away in the flowing stream; the flock, shining in the purest white,* go up from the pool, as their custom is, in a line. From these circumstances, the royal preacher borrows the beautiful comparison in this passage; and it is scarcely possible to conceive one more striking and appropriate, to describe the teeth, 'at once so ornamental to the mouth, and so beneficial in the work of nutrition; clean as the fleece which has been washed in the running stream; white as the colour of the purest wool; none rising higher than the other; none standing unduly prominent beyond another; but all set as true as if they were ranged by the compass; and making as regular an appearance as the flocks that are even shorn.'† It places before us, with equal force and propriety, the spiritual meaning of the text; for whether we apply it, with the Chaldee paraphrast, to the ministers of religion, who, under the former economy, fed upon the sacrifices, as the representatives of the people, or who, since the coming of Christ, are engaged in teaching them, and conducting the affairs of the church; or, with the christian expositor, to the graces of the Holy Spirit, and their corresponding exercises in the genuine believer, it gives us a most vivid idea of the immaculate purity and perfect regularity, which ought to adorn the character and actions of the minister, or the private Christian.

Sheep-shearing is an operation to which allusion is more frequently made in the sacred volume. The wool, in very remote times, was not shorn with an iron instrument, but plucked off with the hand.‡ [The know-

* Virgil. † Hervey's Theron and Aspasio, vol. ii. p. 385, note.

‡ Varro de Lingua Latina, lib. iv. De Re Rustica, lib. ii. cap 11. And the custom of plucking off the fleece continued till the age of Varro, who says:—'Qui etiam nunc vellunt (oves) ante triduo habent jejunas, quod languidæ minus radices lanæ retinent.' See also Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. viii. cap. 46. [The Latin word *vellus*, a fleece, comes from a verb, signifying to pluck off.—*Editor.*]

ledge of this circumstance affords an explanation of that prophetic description which Isaiah gives of the meek unrepining submission of the Saviour, during the unparalleled acts of violence through which he was dragged by his persecutors :—'As a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.'* No doubt, the metaphorical language of Isaiah was founded on the existing practice of Eastern shepherds; and, accordingly, one who was familiarly acquainted with those pastoral customs, says, 'woolly rams, laden with thick fleeces, in spring season, being ordered by their shepherd, stand without moving, and silently stooping, surrender themselves into his hand to have the wool taken off.'] From the concurrent testimony of several writers, the time, when it is performed in Palestine, falls in the month of March.† If this be admitted, it fixes the time of the year when Jacob departed from Laban on his return to his father's house, for he left him at the time he went to shear his sheep. In like manner, the sheep of Nabal were shorn in the spring; for among the presents which Abigail made to David, five measures of parched corn are mentioned. But we know, from other passages of Scripture, that they were accustomed to use parched corn when it was full grown, but not ripe; for the people of Israel were commanded in the law not to eat parched corn nor green ears, until the self same day they had made an offering to the Lord.‡

This time seems to have been spent by the eastern

* Isaiah liii. 7.

† Old style. Consideration must be always had, however, in Judea, as well as in all other countries, to the state of the climate and the season, as it is a settled rule among store farmers, not to commence sheep-shearing till the old fleece is so far from the skin as that the shears can clip in the new growth. Harmer has shown, by an extensive collection of facts, that Britain is, on an average, two months later in bringing her productions to maturity than Judea.—*Editor.*

‡ Leviticus xxiii. 14. Ears of grain roasted, have, from the earliest times, been a favourite dish in eastern countries, as we find from the history of Ruth (Chap. ii. 14). It still continues to hold the same high place in the estimation of modern orientals.—*Editor.*

swains, in more than usual hilarity. And it may be inferred from several hints in the Scriptures, that the wealthier proprietors invited their friends and dependants to sumptuous entertainments. Nabal, on that joyous occasion, which the servants of David called a good, or festive day, although a churlish and niggardly man, 'held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king;'* and, on a similar occasion, Absalom treated his friends and relations in the same magnificent style. The modern Arabs are more frugal and parsimonious; yet their hearts, so little accustomed to expand with joyous feelings, acknowledge the powerful influence of increasing wealth, and dispose them to indulge in greater jollity than usual. On these occasions, they perhaps kill a lamb, or a goat, and treat their relations and friends; and at once to testify their respect for their guests, and add to the luxury of the feast, crown the festive board with new cheese and milk;† dates and honey.‡

Bottles of goat skin, with the hairy side inwards, receive the milk of their flocks: and when they wish to make butter, they put the cream into a goat skin, prepared in the same manner, which they suspend in their tents, and then pressing it to and fro, in one uniform direction, quickly produce a separation of the unctuous from the wheyey part of the fluid.§ In the Levant, they tread upon the skin with their feet, which produces the same effect. The last method of separating the butter from the milk, perhaps may throw light upon a passage in Job, of some difficulty:—'When I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me

* 1 Samuel xxv. 36.

† Harmer's Observations, vol. i. p. 194.

‡ Niebuhr's Arabia, vol. i. p. 211. Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii. c. 45, p. 480.

§ Chandler's Travels, p. 2. Shaw's Travels, vol. i. p. 308. Pliny's Natural History, lib. xxviii. cap. 9. Wilde says, we passed the camp of the black tents of the Bedouins. The females of the tribe were churning milk, which is done in a very primitive manner, by shaking it, or swinging it in a goat's skin between two upright posts.—Vol. ii. p. 181.—*Editor.*

out rivers of oil.'* Commentators have observed, what must be obvious to every reader, that the afflicted patriarch meant to say, he once possessed great abundance of these products; but they have not been able to account for the manner of his expression. The way of a great personage was sometimes swept, sometimes strewed with flowers, sometimes watered; but never, as far as we know, moistened with butter. The feet were sometimes annointed with oil, in which odoriferous substances had been infused; but to them, butter was never applied. It is more natural to suppose, that these words of Job referred to the method of churning their milk, by treading upon large skins full of cream, with their bare feet. It conveys a still more lively idea of the exuberant plenty which Job once possessed, if this method was adopted, when they had large quantities of milk to churn. A variety of practice, very similar to this, appears to have prevailed in the ancient vineyards. When a small quantity of grapes was to be pressed, it seems to have been done with the hand; for Pharaoh's butler dreamed that he took the grapes and pressed them in this manner into his master's cup. This, it must be admitted, was only a visionary scene; but we must suppose it corresponded with general custom. So, when they meant to churn a small quantity of cream, they suspended it in a skin, from the roof of the tent; and the female part of the family conducted the process. But, when the quantity was very large, as it must have been in the extensive dairies of the patriarchs, who possessed such immense flocks and herds, it was put into a number of skins, and churned by the feet of men.† This, Mr Harmer considers as no improbable account, and by no means an unnatural explanation of the phrase, 'I washed my steps with butter;' and, in the present state of our knowledge, perhaps a more satisfactory one cannot be given.‡

* Job xxix. 6. † Harmer's Observations, vol. i. pp. 440, 441. We are told that the priests at Magnesia used to annoint their

Greece, indeed, lies at a great distance from the land of Uz, and the age when Job flourished is far removed from our times; but as a skin is still the churning vessel used by the Arabs in the Holy Land, as well as in Barbary, and, consequently, as their customs admit of little or no variation, the use of skins in churning, must belong to a very remote antiquity. And the same reason, that might induce the more opulent Greeks, in the time of Chandler, to tread their cream rather than swing it in the tent, or between two poles as the Arabs generally do, might also induce the richer proprietors in Asia, who possessed such numerous flocks, to adopt the same custom. The expression, it must be allowed, is highly figurative, but not more so than many others, in which the oriental muse delights. The term washing, when used poetically, is not surely confined to cleansing the feet, by some purifying fluid; for dipping the feet in the blood of the slain, the Psalmist calls washing the feet. Hence, to plunge them into cream or butter, or to sprinkle them profusely with it, may with equal propriety be called washing them in butter, —and walking in it, washing the steps.

The butter is carried to market in the same goat-skins in which it is churned. In consequence of this mode of management, it becomes necessary to melt and strain it, in order to separate the impurities; a process by which it acquires a certain rancid taste, disagreeable, for the most part, to strangers, though not to the natives.* To this custom of melting the butter, in order to clarify it, Zophar seems to allude, in his description of the state and portion of a wicked man :—'He shall not see the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter.'† As the flowing of honey from the comb into the vessels in which it is to be kept, may, by a bold figure, be compared to a little river; so may cla-

feet with fresh butter, and that the king of Abyssinia anoints his head daily with that substance.—*Burder's Oriental Customs.*

* Shaw's Travels, vol. i. p. 308. † Job xx. 17.

rified butter, when poured into the jars in which it is preserved for use. The wicked man, says Zophar, shall not see the rivulets, much less the rivers, still less the torrents of honey and butter (as the clause ought to be rendered), which the righteous may hope to possess. In our excellent translation, the beauty of the climax in this instance is lost; for instead of continuing to rise, the sentence sinks in the close, ending with brook, after mentioning rivers and torrents; but, in the original, it is equally striking and well conducted.

The method of making butter in the East, illustrates the conduct of Jael, the wife of Heber, described in the book of Judges:—'And Sisera said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink, for I am thirsty: and she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him.' In the song of Deborah, the statement is repeated:—'He asked water, and she gave him milk, she brought forth butter in a lordly dish.'* The word *hemah*, which our translators rendered butter, properly signifies cream; which is undoubtedly the meaning of it in this passage, for Sisera complained of thirst, and asked a little water to quench it, a purpose to which butter is but little adapted. Mr Harmer, indeed, urges the same objection to cream, which he contends, few people would think a very proper beverage for one that was extremely thirsty; and concludes that it must have been butter-milk which Jael, who had just been churning, gave to Sisera.† But the opinion of Dr Russel is preferable, that the *hemah* of the Scriptures, is probably the same as the *haymak* of the Arabs, which is not, as Harmer supposed, simple cream, but cream produced by simmering fresh sheeps'-milk for some hours over a slow fire. It could not be butter newly churned, which Jael presented to Sisera, because the Arab butter is apt to be foul, and is commonly passed through a strainer before it is used; and Russel declares, he never saw butter offered to a stranger, but always

* Judges iv. 19; v. 25. † Observations, vol. i. p. 444.

haymak; nor did he ever observe the orientals drink butter-milk, but always *leban*, which is coagulated sour milk, diluted with water. It was *leban*, therefore, which Pococke mistook for butter-milk, with which the Arabs treated him in the Holy land.* A similar conclusion may be drawn concerning the butter and milk which the wife of Heber presented to Sisera; they were forced cream or *haymak* and *leban*, or coagulated sour milk diluted with water, which is a common and refreshing beverage in those sultry regions.

The art of coagulating milk, and converting it into cheese, was known among the Syrian shepherds from the remotest times. Instead of runnet, they turn the milk, especially in the summer season, with sour butter-milk, the flowers of the great-headed thistle, or wild artichoke; and, putting the curds afterwards into small baskets made with rushes, or with the dwarf palm, they bind them up close, and press them. The circumstance of curds, or any liquid, being put into baskets made of rushes, may appear incredible. They are, however, common in the East, and made of so close a texture as to be capable of containing the thinnest fluid.† These cheeses are rarely above two or three pounds weight; and in shape and size, resemble our penny loaves. Oriental cheeses are sometimes of so very soft a consistence, after they are pressed, and even when they are set upon the table, that they bear a very near resemblance to curds, or to coagulated milk, which forms a very considerable part of eastern diet.‡ But the ten cheeses which David carried to the camp

* Travels, vol. ii. part 2, p. 25.

† Vaillant's and Barrow's Travels,

‡ When Polyphemus had coagulated the half of his milk, he laid it up for use in osier baskets.—*Odyssey*, lib. ix. l. 246, 247. And when Ulysses examined his cave, he was surprised at the number of these utensils groaning under the weight of cheeses.—L. 219. Varro says some of the cheeses made in Italy were soft, others hard, according to their age. In Palestine they were all soft.—*De Re Rust.* lib. ii. cap. 10. We were treated to a breakfast, of which clouted

of Saul, seem to have been fully formed, pressed and sufficiently dried, to admit of their being removed from one place to another, without the frames in which they were made.*

The word *harouts*, derived from a verb which signifies to cut off, frequently signifies a piece or lump of any thing. Thus, in Daniel, it means a ruin, or heap of ruins;† in the book of Job, a piece of rock or stone;‡ and in the prophecies of Zechariah, a lump of native gold.§ Hence the phrase under consideration literally signifies ten lumps; and the word *haheleb*, is added to determine what they were, ten lumps of milk, which can mean nothing else than ten cheeses; for what are these but lumps of coagulated milk? Our translators did not, as Harmer says, leave out the last word as unnecessary, but gave the genuine meaning of the whole phrase. This exposition is supported by the Septuagint, in which it is rendered by τρυφαλιδας του γαλακτος, explained by Hesychius, pieces of the tender cheese or curd. But neither the original term, nor the exposition of these different anthors, determines whether the coagulated milk remained in the basket, or, although still new and fresh, had acquired such consistency as to admit of being carried to so great a distance without the frame. As we know, however, that the eastern cheeses were pressed after they were bound up in the rush mould, it is more probable they were not in the state of soft curd, but of new cheese.

The shepherds of Syria and the East have, from the remotest antiquity, carried on a considerable trade with the circumjacent cities. The people of Aleppo are still supplied with the greater part of their but-

cream formed a part. Ali partook of it; and I mention this fact, because it was the only occasion I ever knew any oriental taste milk that had not been previously soured.—*Vere Munro*, vol. ii. p. 282.—*Editor.*

* 1 Sam. xvii. 18. Shaw's Travels, vol. i. p. 308.

† Dan. ix. 25. ‡ Job xli. 30. § Zech. ix. 3.

ter, their cheese, and their cattle for slaughter, by the Arabs, Kushwans, or Turcomans, who travel about the country, with their flocks and herds, as did the patriarchs of old.* It was undoubtedly by trading with the ancient cities of Canaan in such articles of provision, that Abraham became so rich in silver and gold. The lucrative commerce which Jacob, his grandson, carried on with the inhabitants of Shechem, is mentioned by Hamor their prince, and urged as a reason of alliance and union:—'These men are peaceable with us; therefore, let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, it is large enough for them.'† While the wealth of the country, where they tended their flocks and herds, flowed into the coffers of these shepherd princes, in a steady and copious stream, their simple and frugal manner of living required but little expense for the support of their numerous households; and their nomadic state prevented them from contracting alliances, or forming connexions of an expensive nature. Hence, in a few years, they amassed large quantities of the precious metals; they multiplied their flocks and their herds, till they covered the face of the country for many miles; they engaged a numerous train of servants from the surrounding towns and villages, and had servants born in their house, of the slaves whom they had purchased, or taken prisoners in war. When Abraham heard that his brother Lot was taken captive by the king of Shinar and his confederates, he armed his trained servants born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan. The truth of the Scripture accounts is verified by the present state of the Arabian chieftains in those very places where Abraham and his descendants formerly wandered. By the unimpeachable testimony of Russel, they are equally rich, and powerful, and independent, as were these renowned patriarchs; they are surrounded with servants and

* Russel's History, vol. i. pp. 165, 388. † Genesis xxxiv. 21.

retainers, equally numerous, resolute, and faithful; they are, in fine, the modern patriarchs of the East.* In Persia and in Turkey, where the country is full of Turcoman shepherds, their chiefs appear with a great train of servants, richly clothed and mounted.

These Turcoman shepherds, besides their lucrative trade in the various products of their flocks and herds, engage a little in agriculture.† Those in Syria and Palestine do the same; and, in Barbary, it is very common. The Bedouin Arabs in that country, are divided into tribes, like their brethren in other parts, and live in tents, formed into itinerant villages: these nomadic villagers farm lands from the inhabitants of the towns, sow and cultivate them, paying the rent with the produce; and are said to discover great skill in choosing the most advantageous soils for every season.‡

We are not informed whether Abraham attempted to raise any part of his supplies in this way; but the successful exertions of his son Isaac, in cultivating the soil, are distinctly stated in the memoir of his life; and, it may be supposed, from the richness of his harvests in the fields of Gerar, that he possessed the intelligence for which the Arabian shepherds in Barbary are so celebrated.§ It would seem, too, from the circumstances of the story, that he rented the lands from the fixed inhabitants; for the king of Gerar, envying his prosperity, compelled him to remove from them to another part of the country, which he would scarcely have ventured to do, had they been unappropriated

* La Roque Voy. dans la Palest. p. 157.

† It is the farm produce of this little piece of land, which enables them to maintain their extensive households with the grain or parched corn, which forms, together with the various preparations of milk, their staple food. They have a clear profit, therefore, in selling their stock; plenty of income from disposing of their sheep and cattle at the neighbouring markets, and no outlay.—*Editor.*

‡ Shaw's Travels, vol. i. p. 426, &c. Harmer's Observations, vol. i. p. 138-140.

§ Genesis xxvi. 12.

lands, or his own property. The manner in which the king addressed him, clearly shows that he dreaded his power, as well as envied his success; and that Isaac was not a person to be treated with unceremonious rudeness:—'Go from us, for thou art much mightier than we,' was the language of a man, conscious of his weakness and inferiority. Had Isaac, therefore, cultivated lands in the neighbourhood of Gerar, to which the people of that city had no just claim, the petty prince of that town, whom Isaac might have crushed when he pleased, had not presumed to disturb his operations. But if the right of cultivating these lands depended upon an agreement with the men of Gerar, when the crop for which the contract had been made was gathered in, the king of that city might, without injustice, refuse to renew it, and assign this as the reason. This view now given, receives additional confirmation from the address of Isaac to Abimelech, the king of Gerar, when, probably dreading the consequence of his uncourteous behaviour, he paid him a visit in his tent, and endeavoured to secure his friendship by a solemn treaty:—'Wherefore,' said Isaac, 'come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you?' The patriarch does not complain, that he was dispossessed of lands which belonged to himself, or forcibly driven from those which no man owned; but, in saying, Ye have sent me away from you, he seems to admit that the lands were theirs, and that he had farmed them by their permission, or by mutual compact, which they refused from envy to renew.

The patriarch Abraham, following the dictates of a wise policy, concluded treaties of peace and alliance with some of the principal shepherds in his neighbourhood; of whom only the names of Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre are mentioned in the sacred text. These were his principal auxiliaries in the war with the king of Shinar and his confederates; and they seem, from the

honourable mention he makes of them after his return from the battle to the king of Sodom, to have been of essential service in that expedition. Isaac, animated by the principles, and imitating the policy, of his renowned father, did not refuse the proffered friendship of Abimelech, the king of Gerar, although he was not insensible to the unkind treatment he had received. This treaty, which furnishes a very strong proof of Isaac's power, and the high respect attached to his name, is given at full length by Moses, and is remarkable for being the first document of the kind in the records of history. 'Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath, one of his friends, and Phichol, the chief captain of his army. And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye unto me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you? And they said, We saw certainly, that the Lord was with thee; and we said, let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee; and let us make a covenant with thee, that thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace; thou art now the blessed of the Lord.' After this negociation, which is not less singular in the history of diplomacy for its brevity than for its moderation and good faith, 'He made them a feast, and they did eat and drink. And they rose up betimes in the morning, and sware one to another; and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace.'* In the same manner, family alliances are frequent among the Arabian shepherds, and, indeed, rendered necessary by the state of continual warfare in which they live with the neighbouring tribes. The eighteen Arab emirs of the family which d'Arvieux visited, kept near one another, encamping at no greater distance from their chief than a league or two, and all removing together every month, sometimes every fortnight, as their cattle wanted fresh pasture, that they

* Gen. xxvi. 26–31.

might be able to assemble with ease * But, while Abraham and Isaac cultivated the friendship of their neighbours, entered into treaties of peace and amity with the kings and princes of Canaan, and entertained them in their tents, Ishmael, animated by different principles and views, commenced a course of action, after leaving his father's house, so new and unprecedented, that it was made the subject of a distinct prediction. Standing on the verge of a burning desert, which he claimed as his proper inheritance, he assumed from the beginning a hostile attitude, spurned the ties of peace and friendship, and laid all the surrounding tribes under contribution. When he drew upon himself and his adherents the resentment of the fixed inhabitants, and was afraid to risk their attack, he withdrew into the depths of the great wilderness, where none could follow him with hopes of success. In the same manner have his descendants lived; when threatened with an unequal contest, they will strike their tents in less than two hours warning, and retire immediately, with all their effects, into the deserts, with whose wells and forage they only are acquainted. Within those impenetrable barriers, which are for ever guarded by hunger and thirst, the Arabians regard with utter contempt the warlike array of the most powerful nations.†

To these circumstances the prophet seems to allude in the charge which he addresses to Dedan and Hazor: —'Flee ye, turn back, dwell deep, O inhabitants of Dedan; for I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him, the time that I will visit him.'‡ Dedan, it has been already observed, was one of the sons of Cush, whose first settlement was in the country adjoining to his brother Canaan on the south, a part of Arabia. Hazor,

* La Roque Voy. dans la Palest. pp. 103, 106.—The same reason, viz. the desire of defence and protection induces a small or weak tribe frequently to keep in the near neighbourhood of a large and stronger one. Thus Lot went with Abraham's, the greater tribe. —*Stuart's View of Society*, p. 141.—*Editor.*

† La Roque Voy. dans la Palest. pp. 190, 191. ‡ Jer. xlix. 8, 30.

which is joined with Dedan in this charge, was a city of Canaan, near the waters of Merom, in Upper Galilee, the regal city of Jabin, the most powerful prince in that part of the country. It was this king who summoned the princes around him to battle against Joshua, and the armies of Israel; but, being entirely routed, he lost his kingdom and his life together, and Hazor his capital was reduced to ashes. It was afterwards rebuilt by the Canaanites, and became once more the seat of empire; but was again destroyed by the armies of Israel, under the command of Deborah and Barak.* After the war, it was restored by the remains of its ancient inhabitants; and although it never recovered its former grandeur and importance, it continued till the time of Jeremiah. From this statement it is clear, that Hazor was the capital of a Canaanitish nation, not, as Harmer contends, a station of Arabian shepherds. The phrase to 'dwell deep,' in relation to the fixed inhabitants of that city, and the kingdom of which it was the capital, must therefore refer to the caverns in Galilee and the neighbourhood, in whose capacious recesses they were accustomed to take refuge in time of war. Or, if it signify to dwell far remote from the threatened danger, the many other caverns beyond Damascus, towards Arabia, which the prophet might allude to, were at a sufficient distance to justify his language. Nor is it inconsistent with the manners of the Arabians, as Harmer supposes, to retire into caves and dens of the earth for shelter; for the Bedouins in the neighbourhood of Aleppo, who encamp near the gates in the spring, inhabit grottoes in the winter.† And Mohammed mentions an Arabian tribe, that hewed houses out of the mountains for their security.‡ To these caverns, both the wandering Arabs and the fixed inhabitants certainly retreated in time of danger;

* Josh. xi. 10, 11; Judg. iv. 24.
† Russel's Hist. of Aleppo, vol. i. p. 162.
‡ Koran, chap. xv. xxvi.

although the more common practice of the former was to retire into the depth of their terrible deserts, where no enemy could disturb their repose.*

The generous hospitality, displayed by the Syrian shepherds, commands the applause of every reader. Of their kind attention to strangers, the patriarch Abraham furnishes an illustrious example. He was sitting in his tent door in the heat of the day, when three strangers met his eye; starting from his seat, he ran to meet them, bowed himself to the ground, and invited them to an entertainment under the oak, whose extended arms screened his tent, and offered, at the same time, to the passing travellers, a refreshing shade. The invitation was accepted, and a calf was immediately killed, and cakes of fine flour were baked for the repast. But a correct and lively idea of this pleasing scene, can be obtained only from the simple and beautiful description of the inspired historian:—'And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. And he took butter and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and

* The explanation in the text with regard to the inhabitants of Hazor dwelling deep is plausible; at the same time, if speedy refuge in the neighbouring caverns was the meaning of the exhortation, we can understand how they should be advised to flee and turn back; but cannot so easily perceive the propriety of the addition, to dwell deep. The habits of the modern Arabs incline us rather to adopt Harmer's opinion, that the prophet referred to the dwellers retreating to the inaccessible solitudes of the deserts. In regard to one tribe of this people, Niebuhr informs us, that when the Pasha of Bagdad sends troops to chastise their lawless aggressions, as soon as they receive intelligence they retire to the *bottom of the desert*, whither their pursuers dare not follow them; and Savage tells us, that the Arabs generally, whenever they are in danger, pack up their tents, ravage the flat country, and, laden with plunder, plunge into the burning sands, whether none can pursue them, and where they alone dare dwell.—*Editor*.

he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.'* In this narrative we have a number of circumstances very different from our customs, and even from our ideas of propriety. We are ready to suppose that the patriarch, who lived in a state of princely splendour and affluence, would have had a variety of provisions ready prepared for his own table, and for the entertainment of those strangers whom he might think proper to invite. But it was now the heat of the day; Abraham, according to the custom of that country, had already dined, and there was time enough to kill meat for supper. Fresh meat is not preserved from one meal to another in the East, as in colder latitudes, but is killed and dressed for each repast, the residue of the former meal being always consumed by the attendants and servants. One reason for this custom is, the impossibility of preserving fresh meat long in those burning climates. For the same reason they bake their bread just as it is needed. These facts account for such a man as Abraham having neither meat nor bread to set before the angels, when they came to his tent on their way to Sodom.†

The modern Arabs still practise the ardent hospitality of their renowned ancestors, both in their encampments and in their villages. 'When a stranger enters one of their stations, where he knows nobody, he inquires for the menzil, which is the place destined for the reception of travellers, and desires to speak with the sheich, the head man of the settlement, or at least his representative. After saluting him, he signifies his want of a dinner, or his wish to sup or lodge

* Gen. xviii. 6, 7, 8.

† See Harmer's Observations, vol. ii. pp. 84, 226. See also Forbes's Oriental Memoirs, vol. i. p. 215, *et seq.*—In ancient Greece the shepherds were not less renowned for kindness to strangers and the poor, whom they considered as sent by Jupiter to their care:

——— προς γαρ Διος εισιν απαντες
Ξεινοι τε, πτωκοι τε.

Odyss. lib. xiv. l. 57, 58.

in the village. The sheich bids him welcome, and assures him that he could not do him and his people a greater pleasure. He then marches before the stranger to the menzil, who takes up his abode there, and is furnished with every accommodation the place can afford. But if the sheich happens to be absent, a stranger may proceed at once to the menzil, and call for every thing he wants. A stranger, however, seldom has occasion for all this; for as soon as the villagers see a stranger coming, they inform the sheich of it, who goes to meet him, accompanied by some of his people, and having saluted him, asks if he would dine in the village, or whether he would choose to stay the whole night there. If he answer that he would only eat a morsel and go forward, and that he chose to stay under some tree in the vicinity, the sheich goes, or sends his people into the village, to cause a collation to be brought; and in a little time they return with provisions of every kind, according to the season. When several strangers are to lodge for the night in the settlement, the preliminary ceremonies being observed, the women belonging to the sheich's house, having marked the number of the guests, never fail to provide a sufficient quantity of meat for the entertainment of the travellers, and of those who are to bear them company, and quickly make it into soup, or dress it in a variety of ways, according to their customs, which they send to the menzil by the sheich's servants, in wooden bowls, placed on a great round straw mat, which usually serves them for a table. These dishes being set in order, with many others, in which are eggs, cheese, fruit, salad, sour-curdled milk, or leban, and all that they have to treat their friends with, which they set before them at once, that every one may eat as he likes,—the sheich begs the strangers to sit round the mat, sitting down with them himself, with the other peasants of fashion belonging to the village, in order to do them honour; they make no use of knives at

table, the meat being all cut into little bits.'* This picture of oriental hospitality, in modern times, will enable the reader to form a clear and precise idea of the manner in which Abraham entertained his guests under the spreading oak of Mamre. The most remarkable difference is, that the sheich sat down with his guests; while, to express the extreme reverence with which the patriarch treated his visitants, he stood by them during the time of their repast.

* La Roque de la Palestine, pp. 124-129.—Burckhardt, describing the hospitality of the pastoral tribes of Arabia, says that in many instances it is carried to a pitch that might almost appear unnatural or affected, even to a generous European, but which, nevertheless, is strictly according to the laws established among that people; and in illustration of this, he mentions an anecdote of Djerba, the then powerful sheich of Beni Shammar in Mesopotamia, who, a good many years before, had encamped in a province of the eastern desert, at a time when Arabia suffered most severely from dearth and famine. The cattle of himself and his Arabs had mostly perished from want of food, as no rain had fallen for a considerable time; at length there remained of all the cattle only two camels, which belonged to him. Under these circumstances, two respectable strangers alighted at his tent, and it was necessary to provide them with supper. No provisions of any kind were left in his own tent, nor could the tents of his Arabs furnish a morsel; dry roots and shrubs had for several days served as food to these people, and it was impossible to find either a goat or a lamb for the entertainment of the strangers! Djerba could not bear the thought of allowing his guests to pass the night without supper, or that they should retire hungry to sleep. He, therefore, commanded that one of his two surviving camels should be killed. To this his wife objected, alleging that their children were too weak to follow the camp next morning on foot, and that the camels were absolutely necessary for the removal of his own family, and of some of his neighbours' wives and children. 'We are hungry, it is true,' said one of his guests, 'but we are convinced of the validity of your arguments; and we shall trust to the mercy of God for finding a supply of food somewhere to-morrow; yet,' added he, 'shall we be the cause that Djerba's enemies should reproach him for allowing a guest to be hungry in his tent?' This well-meant remark stung the noble-minded sheich to the soul; he silently went out of the tent, laid hold of his mare, and throwing her on the ground, was engaged in tying her feet, that he might kill her for his guests, when he heard afar the sound of approaching camels: he paused, and had the satisfaction of seeing two camels arrive, loaded with rice, which had been sent to him as a present from a neighbouring province.—*Burckhardt's Travels.—Editor.*

[The hospitable reception Mr Buckingham met with in Mesopotamia, from the sheich of a Turcoman tribe, bears, in many of the particulars he has detailed, so striking a resemblance to Abraham's entertainment of the angelic strangers, that we shall give it in his own words :—'When we alighted at his tent door, our horses were taken from us by his son, a young man, well dressed. His father was sitting beneath the awning in front of the tent itself, and rose up to receive us, exchanging the salute of welcome, and not seating himself till all his guests were accommodated. He was a fine-looking man of eighty, with a long beard of silvery white. Some of our fellow-travellers seeing us, stopped as they passed, alighted likewise, and took their seats, without invitation,—all being received with the same welcome. While we were talking, a meal was preparing for us within ; and soon afterwards, warm cakes *baked on the hearth*, cream, honey, butter, raisins, curds and wheat boiled in milk, were served to the company. *Neither the sheich nor any of his family partook with us, but stood around, to wait on their guests*, though some beggars and slaves were among those who sat down to eat.'* Mr Carne, when crossing an extensive plain in Syria, was obliged to throw himself on the hospitality of a pastoral tribe, whose encampment stood invitingly in his way. The tents stood in a long line ; the numerous flocks and herds were grazing on every side. Since day-break, he had travelled five or six hours, and had begun to look wistfully around, when he espied in the distance the glistening tents of the Arabs : in the middle, and loftier than the others, was that of the sheich. He and his friends were met by the aged chief with a simple and cordial welcome, and in half an hour were served with a plentiful meal, for which no remuneration could be offered—it would have been received as an insult. † When Dr Shaw was travelling in Bar-

* Buckingham's Travels. † Views in Syria, vol. i. p. 56.

bary, he came one day, after a fatiguing journey, to a tribe of Arabs ; the chief of whom, *meeting him before he had reached the tent*, welcomed him and his party in the most pressing manner to alight. They complied with the invitation of the hospitable sheich, and were presented, on their arrival, with a bowl of milk and a basket of raisins, to blunt the edge of appetite ; and while they were occupied with this, he left them, to fetch from his flock a lamb, half of which was immediately seethed by his wife, and served up with rice, while the rest was cut into small pieces and roasted.* Some English gentlemen attached to the late embassy to Persia, made one day an excursion into the country, with a view of seeing the manners of the people. They entered a plain, covered with the black tents of the Eelauts, a tribe of wandering Tartars. When, on their approach being known, the senior of the tribe, an old man full of fire and activity, came out to welcome them to his tent, with such kindness, yet with such respect, that his sincerity could not be doubted ; and immediately on their compliance, his attendants in the camp were at hand. Some took charge of the horses, others spread mats, one was dispatched to the flock to bring a fat lamb, which was carried to the women, who immediately set about cooking it ; and the gentlemen had not sat long before two large dishes of stewed lamb were placed before them, accompanied with several basins of soup. Mr Vere Monro, when treated with similar hospitality, had the honour of being waited upon by his host's daughters, who, employed in the household affairs, prepared the dinner, and having placed it upon the table, *stood by to serve*, removing the dishes, and bringing others in succession, in spite of all his remonstrances and requests that they would join the party.†]

The Arab chieftian who entertained Lord Belmore and his party, 'sat by, and, out of respect for his guests,

* Shaw's Travels. † Trav. vol. ii. p. 129.

did not mean to partake of any thing till they were satisfied.' When they had finished their dinner, a servant came round with a pitcher full of water, part of which he poured upon their hands, the only instruments of feeding with which they were favoured; when the first had washed and dried his hands with the towel, which accompanied the basin, he went to the second, and so round the company.*

Abraham, on that occasion, killed a calf for the entertainment of his guests, although they only proposed to stop for a short refreshment, in testimony of his munificence towards persons whom he seems to have regarded with uncommon reverence. The quantity of food prepared for the strangers, by the hospitable patriarch, is apt to excite our surprise; he dressed a whole calf, and three measures of meal made into cakes, which comes to more than two of our bushels, and nearly to fifty-six pounds of our weight. It is probable that, by this ample provision, Abraham meant at once to consult his own credit, to express the generous liberality which glowed in his bosom, and the profound respect which he felt for the strangers, in whose form and mein, perhaps, he discovered, from the first, something which betokened more than mortal excellence.†

The patriarchal shepherds often amused themselves, or supplied their wants, by hunting. It seems to have been an exercise in which Esau excelled; and the familiar way in which his father Isaac commanded him to take his weapons, his quiver and his bow, and go out to the field and take him some venison, clearly shows that the patriarchs and their descendants fre-

* Richardson's Trav. vol. ii. p. 229. The Christians in the East often themselves wait upon guests of superior rank; in other cases they sit, and are served by their children and servants.—*La Roque.*—*Editor.*

† The remains of the veal being, probably according to usage distributed among the servants, a proportionately large quantity of bread would need to be prepared.—*Editor.*

quently indulged in the pleasures of the chase. The snare and the trap, the quiver and the bow, were the first implements of the hunter. At this exercise, the Arabs, and, according to Dr Shaw, the eastern nations in general, are very dexterous. 'Their method of hunting the wild boar is this: after they have roused the beast from his hiding-place, and pursued him into some adjacent field, their first endeavour is, by frequently overtaking and turning him, to tire and perplex him, and then watching an opportunity, they either throw their lances at him from a distance, or else coming close by his side, which is the most valiant way, they lodge their spears in his body.

'At the hunting of the lion, a whole district is summoned to appear, who, forming themselves first into a circle, enclose a space of four or five miles in compass, according to the number of the people, and the quality of the ground which is pitched upon for the scene of action. The footmen advance first, rushing into the thickets with their dogs and spears, to put up the game; while the horsemen, keeping a little behind, are always ready to charge upon the first sally of the wild beast. In this manner they proceed, still contracting their circle, till they all at last close in together, or meet with some other game to divert them. The accidental pastime on these occasions is sometimes very entertaining; for the several different sorts of animals that lie within this compass, being thus driven together, or frightened from their dens, they rarely fail of having a variety of agreeable chases after hares, jackalls, hyænas, and other wild beasts. The manner of hunting with the falcon is thus described by Hasselquist, who had an excellent opportunity of seeing the sport:—"An Arab, mounting a swift courser, held a falcon in his hand, which he let loose when he saw the wild goat, of which he was in quest, on the top of a mountain. The falcon attacked it from time to time, fastening its talons on or near the throat, till the hunts-

man coming up, took it alive, and cut its throat; the falcon drinking the blood as a reward for his services." '

'Those who delight in fowling do not spring the game with dogs, as we do; but, shading themselves with an oblong piece of canvass, stretched over a couple of reeds or sticks, like a door, they walk with it through the several brakes and avenues, where they expect to find game. The canvass is usually spotted, or painted with the figure of a leopard, and perforated near the top in a few places, for the fowler to look through, and observe what passes before him. The partridge and other gregarious birds, when the canvass approaches, will covey together, although they were feeding before at some distance from one another. The woodcock, quail, and other birds, which do not commonly feed in flocks, will, at sight of the extended canvass, stand still and look with astonishment; which gives the sportsman an opportunity of coming very near them; and then resting the canvass upon the ground, and directing the muzzle of his piece through one of the holes, he will sometimes shoot a whole covey at a time. The Arabs have another, but a more laborious method of catching these birds; for, observing that they become languid and fatigued, after they have been hastily put up two or three times, they immediately run in upon them, and knock them down with their bludgeons. They are likewise well acquainted with that method of catching partridges called tunnelling; and to make the capture the greater, they will sometimes place behind the net, a cage with some tame ones within, which, by their perpetual chirping and calling, quickly bring down the coveys which are within hearing, and, by that means, destroy great numbers of them.* To hunt the jackall, which greatly abounds in that country, they sometimes use a leopard which has been trained to hunting from his youth. The hunter keeps the animal before him on his horse, and

* Shaw's Trav. vol. i. p. 424.

when he meets with a jackall, the leopard leaps down, and creeps along till he think himself within reach of the prey, when he leaps upon it with incredible agility, throwing himself seventeen or eighteen feet at a time.' These statements illustrate the force and propriety of those passages of holy writ which allude to the arts and implements of the hunter and the fowler, by which the timid victim is taken ere it is aware ; or the bold is compelled by main force, or by deadly wounds, to submit to his more cunning or powerful adversary. It is not without reason, the Psalmist rejoiced that the snare was broken, and his soul had escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowler ; and that God had brought his feet out of the net.*

Before taking leave of this subject, it may not be improper to direct the reader's attention to a text, which has long exercised the critical powers of expositors. When Joseph was going to introduce his father and his brethren to the Egyptain court, he instructed them to say they were shepherds, that they might be separated from the natives, and settled together in the land of Goshen ; a country abounding with rich and ample pastures, and lying nearest to Canaan, the place of their future residence. On this occasion, the sacred writer observes, that ' every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptains.' Cunæus, with great plausibility, ascribes the detestation of that people, to the ferocious dispositions and rebellious conduct of the shepherds who tended their flocks in the plains and marshes of Lower Egypt. ' These,' says that writer, ' were active and able men, but execrable to all the Egyptains, because they would not suffer them to lead their idle course of life in security. These men often excited great commotions, and sometimes created kings for themselves. It was, on this account, that the Romans, in succeeding times, when they easily held the rest of Egypt in obedience, placed a strong garrison in all

* Psa. xxv. 15.

these parts. When you have taken the most exact survey of all circumstances, you will find this was the reason that made the Egyptains, even from the first, so ill affected to shepherds; because these sedentary men and handicrafts could not endure their fierce and active spirits. Pharaoh himself, when he had determined to abate and depress the growing numbers of the Israelites, spake to his subjects in this manner:—'The Israelites are stronger than we; let us deal wisely, that they increase not, lest, when war arises, they join themselves to our enemies, and take up arms against us.'

But this view does not account for the use of the term, which is properly rendered abomination, and which indicates, not a ferocious and turbulent character, which is properly an object of dread and hatred, but a mean and despicable person, that excites the scorn and contempt of his neighbours. It is readily admitted, that the detestation in which shepherds were held in Egypt, could not arise from their employment in the breeding of cattle; for the king himself, in the days of Joseph, had very numerous flocks and herds, in the management of which he did not think it unbecoming his dignity to take a lively interest. This is proved by the command to his favourite minister:—'If thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle.'* Nor were his numerous subjects less attentive to this branch of industry; every one seems to have lived upon his paternal farm, part of which was converted into pasture. Hence, when money failed in the years of famine, 'all the Egyptians came to Joseph, and said, Give us bread; for why should we die in thy presence? for the money faileth. And Joseph said, Give your cattle, and I will give you bread for your cattle, if money fail.'† But if Pharaoh and all his subjects, were themselves engaged in the rearing of stock, a shepherd could not be to them

* Gen. xlvii. 6. † Ver. 15, 16.

an object of general abhorrence. Besides, it was not unlawful in Egypt to deprive an ox or a sheep of life, and feast upon the flesh; for, in the temples, these animals were offered in sacrifice every day;* and for what purpose did the Egyptains rear them on their farms, but to use them as food? The contempt in which this order of men were held, then, could not be owing to the superstition of the nation in general. It may even be inferred from the command of Pharaoh to Joseph, requiring him to appoint the most active of his brethren rulers over his cattle, that the office of a shepherd was honourable among the Egyptians; for it could not be his design to degrade the brethren of his favourite minister. This idea is confirmed by Diodorus, who asserts, that husbandmen and shepherds were held in very great estimation in that country.† But that writer states a fact, which furnishes the true solution of the difficulty—that, in some parts of Egypt, shepherds were not suffered.‡ The contempt of shepherds seems, therefore, to have been confined to some parts of the kingdom; probably to the royal city, and the principal towns in Upper Egypt, where the luxury of a court, or the wealth and splendour of the inhabitants, taught them to look down with contempt and loathing upon those humble peasants. But the true reason seems to be stated by Herodotus, who informs us that those who worship in the temple of the Theban Jupiter, or belong to the district of Thebes, the ancient capital of Egypt, abstained from sheep and sacrificed goats. But sheep and oxen were the animals which the shepherds usually killed for general use. It was natural, therefore, for that superstitious people to regard with abhorrence those who were in the daily practice of slaughtering the objects of their religious veneration. But this custom was confined to the district of Thebes; for, according to the same writer, 'in the temple of Medes, and in the

* Rollin's Ancient Hist. vol. 1. p. 195.

† Lib. i. cap. 74, p. 85. ‡ Rollin's Anc. Hist. vol. i. p. 220.

whole Mendesian district, goats were preserved and sheep sacrificed.'* Shepherds, therefore, might be abhorred in one part of Egypt and honoured in another. The sagacious prime minister of Egypt, desirous to remove his brethren from the fascinations of wealth and power, directed them to give such an account of themselves, that the counsellors of Pharaoh, from their dislike of the mean employment in which they had been educated, might grant their request, and suffer them to settle in Goshen, a land of shepherds, far removed from the dangerous blandishments of a court.†

* Lib. ii. cap. 42.

† The inhabitants of ancient Egypt were divided into castes. The highest in dignity was that of the priesthood, from which the king was chosen. The second was the military; while the lower classes were all included in the third, husbandmen, tradesmen, and shepherds, who ranked the lowest in the scale. Whether that abhorrence of shepherds, which Moses describes, was confined only to the wealthy and luxurious people who lived in the neighbourhood of the capital, or in a certain part of the land, as is stated in the text, cannot be easily ascertained. The antipathy, however, was deeply rooted, and probably originated from an invasion of a fierce Asiatic tribe who at one time over-run the country, laid waste the cultivated plains, and reduced the people to a grinding servitude; but, being in their turn conquered and expelled, their memory was ever after held in abhorrence by the Egyptians. The researches of Champollion and Wilkinson have discovered many traces of this on the monuments. Shepherds with red hair, blue eyes, and loosely clad in an undressed hide, are painted in the attitude of fighting with the natives, of falling, and meeting with the most scornful usage. They are represented lying under the foot-stools of the king, who placed his feet on their necks. The common people wore figures of them on the soles of their sandals, and by many other expressions of degradation and contempt that appear on the monuments, those venerable relics of antiquity bear testimony to the truth of the Mosaic statement, that 'every shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians.'—*Editor.*

CHAPTER II.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE FROM THE STATE OF AGRICULTURE IN THE EAST.

When God placed Adam in Paradise, he instructed him 'to dress and keep it:'—to work and labour the ground, let in the influences of heaven, prune the trees, cherish the plants, preserve the fruits from the beasts of the field; and the fowls of heaven, which had access to the garden; and to keep all his abode, and the domain around it, in good order. This was the first employment of man, which, by the wise and benevolent arrangements of his Maker, was to cheer and exhilarate the hours of innocence and peace. After his expulsion from the garden on account of his transgression, the command which he had received at his formation, to cultivate the ground, was renewed; and the curse under which it was laid, rendered his exertions more necessary than before. This may be one reason for Adam initiating his eldest son in the art of cultivating the soil, which now refused to produce the necessaries of life in sufficient abundance and perfection, without the skill and industry of man; while he devoted Abel, his younger son, to the easier and more simple occupation of a shepherd.

In the first ages of the world, men were chiefly employed in digging and throwing up the earth by means of rude and inconvenient implements; but Noah made important advances in the art of husbandry, and found out fitter instruments of cultivation than were known before his time. This patriarch, the second father of

our family, is called a man of the ground—in our translation, a husbandman, because of his improvements in agriculture, and his inventions for subduing and fertilizing the soil. In consequence of the divine malediction, useless or noxious plants obtained the ascendancy, and obstructed the growth of esculent vegetables. These obstructions were to be removed with great pains and labour; and the sterility of the ground was to be corrected, and its productive energy excited and improved by the operations of the plough.

The surface of the ground was probably divided into fields, and secured to individual proprietors, long before the flood. By that dreadful catastrophe, the whole earth reverted to its natural, undivided, unappropriated state; but how long it continued in common, we have no means of ascertaining.* In the days of Abraham, who lived at no great distance of time from the flood, the lands of Canaan had become, in some degree, the exclusive property of the nation by whom they were occupied, and been even subdivided into small fields, and claimed as the legal inheritance of private individuals, except the pastures which appear to have remained in common through many succeeding ages.† The patriarch bought a field from Ephron the Hittite, for a possession of a burying-place; and the transaction shews, that the property was perfectly well defined; that Ephron had the same absolute right to it, as any landed proprietor of our times has to his estate. And upon the purchase money being paid, the sacred historian says, 'The field of Ephron which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field and the cave which

* The Arabian husbandmen on the east side of Jordan possess their lands in common; and the only claim they have to the possession of any particular spot, is that of having plowed and sown it, which entitles the person who does so to reap the harvest upon it for that season.—*Buckingham's Trav.* vol. ii. pp. 115, 116.

† There was no great nation at that time in possession of Canaan. It was inhabited by a number of independent tribes, and 'the exclusive property in the land of Canaan' was confined, as has already been stated, to the environs of inhabited places.—*Editor.*

was therein ; and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession, in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city.'* The minute division of landed property in Egypt, is attested by the same infallible authority ; for, under the administration of Joseph, the people of that country were compelled by the famine to sell 'every man his field ;' and ' Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharoah.' When the sons of Israel had conquered the land of promise, it was, by the divine command, surveyed and divided by lot among the twelve tribes ; and then the portion of each tribe was laid out in separate inheritances, according to the number of the families composing the tribe ; and thus every man in the nation had his field, which he was directed to cultivate for the support of himself and his family. To prevent mistake and litigation, these fields were marked off by stones set up on the limits, which could not be removed without incurring the wrath of heaven. The divine command, in relation to this matter, runs in these terms :—' Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's land-mark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess.'† In Persia, land-marks are still used : in the journey from Arzroum to Amasia, Morier found the boundaries of each man's possession here and there marked by large stones.‡

Their inheritances were again divided into parts, which the Hebrews distinguished by the name of portions, or pieces of ground; and distributed by measure into acres. The distribution of a field into acres, is

* Gen. xxiii. 11, 20. † Deut. xix. 14.

‡ Travels, vol. i. p. 332. Land-marks were used in Greece long before the age of Homer; for, when Minerva fought with Mars, she seized with her powerful hand a piece of rock, lying in the plain, black, rugged, and large, which ancient men had placed to mark the boundary of the field.—*Iliad*, lib. xxi. 1, 405, 406.

ascertained by a passage in the first book of Samuel, which is couched in these terms:—'And that first slaughter which Jonathan and his armour-bearer made, was about twenty men, within, as it were, half an acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow.'*

The land of promise was distinguished by extraordinary fruitfulness: Jehovah was pleased, in a special manner, to bless the springing of the earth, and to crown the year with his goodness;† yet this peculiar favour did not supersede the vigilance and activity of the husbandman. The prophet Isaiah intimates, that his countrymen began their operations in the field by erecting fences, and gathering out the stones, and clearing away other incumbrances: 'My well beloved has a vineyard in a very fruitful hill; and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof.'‡ Thorns, or other useless plants, were either dug up by the roots, or consumed by fire. 'For thus saith the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.'§ Rich as the soil of Palestine certainly is, it refused at no time the aid of manure, which travellers and historians tell us is the case in some countries. This fact we discover in several parts of Scripture, but particularly in the parable of the barren fig tree:—'Let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it; and if it bear fruit well; and if not, then shall we cut it down.'‖

* 1 Sam. xiv. 14.

† Mr Buckingham, who describes the mountainous regions of Judea, as, for the most part, an assemblage of naked rocks and precipices, admits the surprising richness of the elevated plains, 'abounding with the most beautiful prospects, clothed with thick forests, varied with verdant slopes, and possessing extensive levels of a fine red soil. The landscape alone, which varied at every turn, and gave us new beauties from every different point of view, was, of itself, worth all the pains of an excursion to the eastward of Jordan.'—*Travels*, vol. ii. pp. 104, 105, 106-108, 390, &c. &c.

‡ Isa. v. 1, 2.

§ Jer. iv. 3.

‖ Luke xiii. 8. Thus we find the Jewish farmer, however highly favoured, was obliged to follow the rule which Virgil prescribed

Not satisfied with cultivating the rich plains and fertile valleys of his native land, he reduced the barren rocks and rugged mountains under his dominion, and compelled them to minister to his necessities. For this purpose he covered them with earth; or, where this was impracticable, he constructed walls of loose stones, in parallel rows along their sides, to support the mould, and prevent it from being washed down by the rains. On these circular plots of excellent soil, which gradually rose one above another, from the base to the very summits of the mountains, he raised abundant crops of corn and other esculent vegetables: or, where the declivity was too rocky, he planted the vine* and the olive, which delight in such situations, and which rewarded his toil with the most picturesque

to his countrymen, to saturate the parched soil with rich dung, and scatter sordid ashes upon the exhausted lands:

——— 'arida tantum
Ne saturare fimo pingui pudeat sola: neve
Effœtos cinerem immundum jactare per agros.—*Geor.* lib. i. l. 79.

* 'In these countries, mantled with vineyards,' says Dr Duff, in the account given of his journey through France, 'one cannot help learning the true intent and use of the vine, in the scheme of Providence. In our own land, wine has become so exclusively a mere luxury, or, what is worse, by a species of manufacture, an intoxicating beverage, that many have wondered how the Bible speaks of *wine* in conjunction with *corn*, and other staple supports of animal life. Now, in passing through the region of vineyards in the east of France, one must at once perceive, that the vine greatly flourishes on slopes and heights, where the soil is too poor and gravelly to maintain either corn for food, or pasturage for cattle.

'But what is the *Providential design* in rendering this soil, favoured by a genial atmosphere—so productive of the vine, if its fruit become solely either an *article* of *luxury*, or an instrument of vice? The answer is, that Providence had *no such design*. Look at the peasant and his meals in vine-bearing districts. Instead of milk, he has a basin of pure unadulterated 'blood of the grape.' In this its native original state, it is a plain, simple, and wholesome liquid; which, at every repast, becomes to the husbandman what milk is to the shepherd,—not a luxury, but a necessary,—not an intoxicating, but a nutritive beverage.

'Hence, to the vine-dressing peasant of Auxerre, for example, an abundant vintage, as connected with his own sustenance, is as important as an overflowing dairy to the pastoral peasant of Ayr-

scenery, and the richest produce. Thus, the places where only the wild goat wandered and the eagle screamed, which appeared to be doomed to perpetual nakedness and sterility, were converted by the bold and persevering industry of the Syrian husbandman into corn-fields and gardens, vineyards and olive plantations, the manifest traces of which, in all the mountains of Palestine, remain to this day. The inhabitants of that 'good land,' literally sang from the top of the rock when it flowed with the blood of the grape, and poured them 'out rivers of oil.'*

The ground, as in our own country, was broken up by means of the plough. The Syrian plough, which was probably used in all the regions around, is a very simple frame, and commonly so light, that a man of moderate strength might carry it in one hand.† Volney states that, in Syria, it is often nothing else than the branch of a tree, cut below a bifurcation, and used without wheels. It is drawn by asses and cows, seldom by oxen.‡ And Dr Russel informs us, the ploughing of Syria is performed often by a little cow, at most two, and sometimes only by an ass.§ 'In Persia, it is for the most part drawn by one ox only, and not unfrequently even by an ass, although it is more ponderous than in Palestine.'‖ With such an imperfect

shire; and hence, by such a view of the subject, are the language and sense of Scripture vindicated from the very appearance of favouring what is merely luxurious or positively noxious, when it so constantly magnifies a well-replenished wine-press in a rocky mountainous country like that of Palestine, as one of the richest bounties of a generous Providence.'—*Missionary Record, April* 1840. —*Editor.*

* Maundrell's Journey, p. 101. Isa. xlii. 11. Job xxix. 6. See also Pocock's Travels, vol. ii. part i. p. 42. Richardson's Travels, vol. ii. pp. 226, 348. Buckingham's Travels in Palestine, vol. i. p. 268.

† Russel's History of Aleppo, vol. i. p. 73.

‡ Travels vol. ii. p. 273. § History of Aleppo, vol. i. p. 73.

‖ Morier's Travels, vol. i. p. 60. Adam's Roman Antiquities, p. 537.—In Egypt they plough with two oxen; the plough is remarkably slight, and has only one handle, which the ploughman holds with one hand, and carries a long stick in the other.—*Richardson's Travels,* vol. ii. p. 197.

instrument, the Syrian husbandman can do little more than scratch the surface of his field, or clear away the stones or weeds that encumber it, and prevent the seed from reaching the soil. The ploughshare is a piece of iron, broad, but not large, which tips the end of the shaft.' [So light and simple is the construction of these implements, as they are used in Palestine, that the husbandman, when returning from his labour in the evening, takes his plough home upon his shoulder, and carries it again to the field in the morning. The share is of wood, and armed only at the end with a tooth or point of iron. The beam is very slender, as well as the rude handle by which it is directed.* 'I obtained,' says a recent traveller, 'a model of a plough at Nazareth; it is differently constructed from that used in Britain. The share, which is small, scarcely grazes the earth; and it has only one handle or shaft, with a small piece of wood across the top for the husbandman to guide it, resembling the head of a staff, or the handle of a spade. The man holds this in his right hand, and carries a long stick in his left, with which he goads the oxen. The whole machine is made so extremely light, that a person might, with facility, carry it in his arms. The share is covered with a piece of broad iron, pointed at the end, so as it might be converted into a weapon of warfare.'†] So much does it resemble the short sword used by the ancient warriors, that it may, with very little trouble, be converted into that deadly weapon; and, when the work of destruction is over, reduced again into its former shape, and applied to the purposes of agriculture. In allusion to the first operation, the prophet Joel summons the nations to leave

* Vere Monro, vol. i. p. 89.—That the ploughs were upon the same light construction in the days of Samuel, may be inferred from the circumstance of a file being used to sharpen them; 1 Sam. xiii. 21. Mr Monro observed fourteen ploughs at work upon a space of twelve or fourteen acres.—*Editor.*

† Rae Wilson's Travels, vol. i. p. 401.

their peaceful employments in the cultivated field, and buckle on their armour :—‘ Beat your plough-shares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears.’* This beautiful image, the prophet Isaiah has reversed, and applied to the establishment of that profound and lasting peace which is to bless the Church of Christ in the latter days :—‘ And they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.’†

The plough, used in Syria, is so light and simple in its construction, that the husbandman is under the necessity of guiding it with great care, bending over it, and loading it with his own weight, else the share would glide along the surface without making any incision. His mind should be wholly intent on his work, at once to press the plough into the ground, and direct it in a straight line. ‘ Let the ploughman,’ said Hesiod, ‘ attend to his charge, and look before him; not turn aside to look on his associates, but make straight furrows, and have his mind attentive to his work.’‡ And Pliny :—‘ Unless the ploughman stoop forward’ to press his plough into the soil, and conduct it properly, ‘ he will turn it aside.’§ To such careful and incessant exertion, our Lord alludes in that declaration :—‘ No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of heaven.’‖

* Joel iii. 10.

† Isaiah ii. 4. Mr Monro, speaking of two hostile tribes of Bedouin Arabs, says :—‘ At the present moment, these warriors had beaten their swords into some more peaceful swords, though neither plough-shares nor pruning-hooks, vol. i. p. 10.] In similar strains the Roman poets sang :—

——— ‘ squalent abductis arva colonis,
Et curvæ rigidum falces conflantur in ensem.’—*Geor.* i. l. 506.

‘ Sarcula cessabunt; versique in pila ligones;
Factaque de rastri pondere cassis erat.’—*Ovid.* Fast. i. l. 697.

‡ Hesiod Opera et Dies. l. 444, 445.

§ Natural History, lib. xviii. cap. 49.

‖ Luke ix. 62. Calmet vol. iii.

The cattle are stimulated with a goad, which, in Syria, is seven or eight feet in length, armed with a sharp point of iron at one end, and, at the other, with a plate of the same metal, shaped like a caulking chissel. One attendant only is necessary for each plough, as he who guides it with one hand, spurs the oxen with the point of the goad, and clears the earth with the ploughshare, by its spaded heel, with the other.'* Stubborn and refractory oxen often resisted the goad, and kicked it with their feet.† This proverbial saying, the glorified Redeemer was pleased to use in his address to Saul on the road to Damascus :—'It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.'‡

The furrows are extremely shallow, but so remarkably straight, although of great length, that one would imagine they had used a line in tracing them. [Mr Wilson, describing the incidents of his travel on his road to Jerusalem, says :—'The husbandmen, with ploughs in a state of patriarchal rudeness, were tilling the soil; and, what is singular, they strewed the surface of the field with seeds, and then ploughed them in. The furrows are made in a direct line.' The same traveller, describing the land about Ephesus, says, 'the penetration of the plough into the land is very shallow, and *the furrows are long.*'§] This allusion seems to be involved in the Psalmist's complaint :—'The ploughers ploughed upon my back, and made long their furrows.'‖

* Buckingham's Travels, vol. i. p. 91.

† Æschylus alludes to this occurrence in the following line :—

Προς κεντρα μη λακτιζε, μη πησας μογης.
In Agamemnone, l. 620.

'Kick not against the iron points, lest thou suffer pain.' Terence makes the same allusion in his Phormion :—

'Nam quæ inscitia est
Adversum stimulum calces.' Act. i. sce e 2.

'For what ignorance is it to kick against the point?'

‡ Acts ix. v. § Rae Wilson, vol. i. p. 187; ii. p. 217.

‖ Psalm cxxix. 3.

The plough was sometimes used in measuring land, by the Greeks and orientals; for Homer, speaking of contending chiefs, has this expression:—

Αλλ' ὁτι δη ρ' απεην, ὁσσον τ' επιουρα πελονται
Ἡμιονων.

Iliad, lib. x. l. 351.

'But when they were now so distant from each other, as the furrows of two teams of mules.' To explain the comparison, it is necessary to state, that the Grecians did not plough in the manner now in use. They first broke up the ground with oxen,* and then ploughed it more lightly with mules. When they employed two ploughs in a field, they measured the space they could plough in a day; and at the two ends of that space, set their ploughs, which proceeded towards each other. This intermediate space was constantly fixed, but less in proportion for two ploughs of oxen than for two of mules; because oxen are slower, and the toil is greater, in a field that has not yet been turned up; whereas mules are naturally swifter, and make greater speed in ground that has already had the first ploughing.† We discover a trace of the same custom in the first book of Samuel, where the historian, describing the valorous exploit of Jonathan, observes:—'And that first slaughter which Jonathan and his armour-bearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were a half acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plough.'‡

[As oxen were the beasts principally employed in the labours of the field, pains were of course taken to train them for the work. But much difficulty was always experienced, and a great amount of skill and patient perseverance were often called into exercise, on the part of the driver, before a young, robust, and well-fed bullock could be reconciled to the loss of its liberty. During the whole of the first day, and sometimes for

* Hesiod. Opera et Dies. l. 429, 436, 468. Varro de Re Rust. lib. i. cap. 10.

† Madame Dacier's Note *in loc*,

‡ 1 Sam. xiv. 14.

two or three days, it would make many a desperate struggle to throw off its restraints, and regain its freedom; sometimes casting itself down on its sides, sometimes plunging so furiously as to break the yoke, resisting the repeated lashes of the driver, and kicking against the sharp iron pricks, till at length it became convinced that it was in the power of a master, to whom further opposition was unavailing, and would be brought to go in the yoke as orderly and patiently as the rest of its more disciplined companions. It is to this boisterous violence, this headstrong impatience of restraint, and the severe chastisement required to reduce it to habits of docility and submission, that the prophet alludes, when he describes the severity of the divine procedure against apostate Ephraim:—'I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus, Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God.'* Ephraim had lifted up the heel of rebellion against God, and given himself to idols. So devoted was his fondness for idolatry, that, though prophets lifted up the voice of censure and earnest expostulation, all ordinary means of persuasion had been insufficient to reclaim him; in consequence of which, the Lord, in his just and angry providence, brought upon him a succession of direful calamities, which produced the happy effect of subduing his pride and obduracy, and restoring him to a better state of mind; and being at length made sensible of the great evil of his ways, in so long resisting the striving of God's Spirit with him, and in lending a deaf ear to the divine admonitions, he is described as soliloquizing on his own conduct, and comparing his self-willed and reckless apostacy to the blind and impetuous violence 'of a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke.' Sometimes, however, a bullock, though long accustomed to the yoke, was naturally of so fierce and in-

* Jeremiah xxxi. 18.

domitable a temper, that neither fair means nor foul, neither soothing gentleness could win, nor the sternest authority awe him into proper and peaceable behaviour; and, in these circumstances, it was customary to bore a hole in his nostrils, through which an iron or wooden ring was introduced, and attached to a rope, which, when pulled by the hand of the driver, gave him so complete a command over the most furious beast, that he could turn it at will in any direction. A very beautiful allusion to this artful contrivance occurs in a passage of Job, which is designed to give an exalted portraiture of the almighty power of Jehovah:—'Canst thou put an *hook* into his nose?'* An equally impressive use of the same figure is made in the course of the prophetic doom which Isaiah pronounced against the blasphemous king of Assyria:—'Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult, is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back, by the way by which thou camest.'†]

After the operation of ploughing was finished, they were under the necessity of breaking the clods in clayey soils, and levelling the surface.‡ It was in the same way that the Israelitish husbandman subdued the stubborn soil of his native land. 'Doth the ploughman

* Job xli. 2.

† 2 Kings xix. 28; see also Ezek. xxxviii. 4. Asses, as well as oxen, were employed in the labours of the field anciently, as they still are in the East. But a benevolent enactment of the law of Moses prohibited the junction of both in the same yoke, which, it seems, was once a prevailing practice, not only because such a combination of different species of unequal strength was unnatural and painful to behold, but also because, in the eye of the ceremonial law, the one was clean, the other was unclean.—*Editor.*

‡ This treatment, Virgil recommends to the cultivators of the age in which he flourished. He too, said the didactic bard, greatly improves the lands, who breaks the sluggish clods with harrows, and drags osier hurdles over them; and he also, who, after the plain has once been torn, again breaks through the land that raises up its ridges, turning the plough across, and stirs it up with frequent exercise, and rules his lands vigorously.—*Georg.* lib. i. l. 94.

plough all day,' rather, plough continually, said Isaiah; 'doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made plain the face of it, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat, and the appointed barley and the rye, in their place?' * And shall the God of wisdom be always uttering his judgments, and warning his people; shall he be always proceeding with his work, and never bring it to a conclusion? No: He will at length execute his threatenings, and correct them for their sins; but not with indiscriminate severity; he will punish them in wisdom, and in proportion to their strength, not that they may be destroyed, but reclaimed from their vicious courses.

'For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him.' That we owe the knowledge of agriculture, the most useful, and the most necessary of all human sciences, to the suggestion of Heaven, is a sentiment which has been entertained by all nations. †

The light of nature thus accords with the dictates of revelation, in ascribing to the goodness of the only wise God, the knowledge of this important art. It is he who gives the husbandman that wisdom and discretion, activity and perseverance, which the successful prosecution of his business requires; he plants the in-

* Isaiah xxviii. 24.

† Virgil ascribes it to the divine intelligence, that mortals exchanged Chaonian mast for fattening ears of corn, and mingled draughts of Achelous with the long ago discovered juice of the grape:—

——— 'vestro si munere tellus
Chaoniam pingui glandem mutavit arista,
Poculaque inventis Acheloia miscuit uvis.'

Geor. lib. i. l. 7.

This idea was also cherished by the Greeks, inculcated by their philosophers, and sung by their poets. The Jewish writers, instructed by the pen of inspiration, are not less clear and precise; with this important difference, that they ascribe the art to the suggestion of the true God. Even the writers of the Apocrypha are sound upon this point. 'The Most High hath ordained husbandry,' saith the son of Sirach, Eccles. vii. 15.

clination in his bosom; he imparts the delight which sweetens his unceasing toil; he crowns his exertions with success. Happy for the cultivator, were his eye continually directed to the source of all his blessings; were he disposed, with filial reverence, to depend on the divine wisdom and goodness, and thankfully to acknowledge the kindness and condescension of his instructor!

The oriental husbandman is compelled, by the extreme heat of the climate, to prosecute his labours in the field, almost in a state of nudity.* But the truth is, neither the Syrian nor Italian husbandman pursued his labours in the field, entirely naked, but only stripped off his upper garments. An oriental was said to be naked, when these were laid aside. This enables us to understand the meaning of the charge which our Lord gave his disciples:—'Neither let him who is in the field, return back to take his clothes.'† The Israelitish peasant, when he proceeded to his work in the field, was accustomed to strip off his upper garments, and leave them behind in the house, and to resume them when his task was finished.

The various kinds of grain, which they commonly sow in the Holy Land, are frequently mentioned in the sacred volume; and the correctness of the statement is attested by modern historians. Oats are not cultivated

* The ardour with which the farmer urged his labour, even under the milder sky of Italy, required the same precaution. 'Plough naked, and sow naked,' said Virgil; 'Winter is an inactive time for the hind:'—

'Nudas ara, sere nudas: hiems ignava colono.'
Geor. lib. i. l. 299.

Hesiod gives the same direction to the husbandmen of Greece, and for the same reason:—'Sow naked, plough naked, reap also naked, if you wish to do your work perfectly.'—*Opera et Dies.* l. 391, 392. Aurelius Victor informs us, that the Roman messengers, who were sent to Cincinnatus, from Atenutius, the consul, whom he had delivered from a siege, found him ploughing naked, beyond the Tiber.

† Matthew xxiv. 18.

near Aleppo ; but Dr Russel observed some fields of them about Antioch, and on the sea coast. The horses are fed universally with barley ; but lucern is also cultivated for their use, in the spring. The earliest wheat is sown about the middle of October ; other grain, among which are barley, rye, and Indian millet, continue to be sown till the end of January ; and barley, even so late as the end of February.

In Italy, they used 'harrows of unwieldy weight ;' besides Arbute hurdles.* The Persian harrow consists of a large rake, which is fastened to a pole, and drawn by oxen.† In Hindostan, it is like an ordinary rake with three or four teeth, and is drawn by two oxen.‡ Similar to this was probably the Syrian harrow. But in Palestine, the harrow is seldom used, the grain being covered by repassing the plough along the edge of the furrow; and in places where the soil is sandy, they first sow, and then plough the seed into the ground.§

It appears, from the prophecies of Isaiah, that besides the more valuable kinds of grain, wheat, barley,

* Geor. lib. i. l. 164. These, the didactic bard advises his countrymen to ply, while the ground is unmoistened with showers, and the clouds are yet suspended :—

'Tempus humo tegere, et jamdudum incumbere rastris
Dum sicca tellure licet, dum nubila pendent.'—*Geor.* i. l. 13.

† Morier's Travels, vol. i. p. 301.

‡ Forbes's Orient. Mem. vol. i. p. 194.

§ Russel's Hist. of Aleppo. vol. i. p. 73. Buckingham says, 'The seed in Palestine is not covered by harrowing, as in Europe.—*Trav.* vol. i. p. 224. [This method is evidently in favour of the grain in such a latitude. It obtains moisture at the bottom of the furrow, which it would not always find at the top, and takes a firmer hold of the soil.—*Brown.* The harrow was often nothing more than a large lump of wood, or a bundle of thick prickly bushes, dragged over the surface of the field, in order to make it plain, as appears from Isaiah xxviii. 24, 25 :—'Doth the ploughman plough all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches (dill), and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat, and the appointed barley, and the rye (corn of Damascus) in their place?'].—*Editor.*

and rye, several aromatic seeds were sown; as the sesamum, coriander, and cummin.* Rice is trodden into the ground by the feet of oxen; a practice seemingly alluded to by the prophet, in these words:—'Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass.'† This, according to Chardin, answers exactly the manner of planting rice; for they sow it upon the waters; and before sowing, while the earth is covered with water, they cause the ground to be trodden by oxen, horses, and asses, to prepare it for receiving the seed. As they sow the rice on the water, so they transplant in the water; for the roots of this plant must be kept continually moist, to bring the rice to maturity.‡ [The same custom is alluded to in those words of the wise man:—'Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it, with increase, many days hence.'§ Every inhabitant of Palestine was so perfectly familiar with this peculiarity in the agricultural practice of their country, that the sacred writer could, with the greatest propriety, use it metaphorically as the foundation of a precept intended to be of universal application. Those, indeed, who lived in the immediate neighbourhood of the Jordan had special inducements to resort to that mode of sowing their seed, for that stream annually overflowing its banks, those inundations covered the ground on both sides of it to a considerable extent with a slimy deposit, which afforded an excellent top-dressing, and of which the farmers well knew to avail themselves. But the practice was not confined to these, the climate recommending it to the people generally. For as by the long tract of sultry heat that prevails in summer, the ground is completely parched

* These, the orientals sprinkled upon their bread, to give it a more agreeable flavour.

† Isaiah xxxii. 20.

‡ See also Sonnini's Travels in Egypt, p. 145, and Diodorus Sicul. lib. i. cap. 36, pp. 42, 43.

§ Eccles. xi. 1.

and dried up, and copious rains begin to fall for two or three days towards the end of September, after which there occurs nearly a month of fine weather, every one is busily employed during that interval in ploughing and sowing. To sow before the rain falls would be absolutely throwing away the seed, as the ground is then too hard and impenetrable to receive it. And as every one is too anxious to avail himself of that brief period of dry weather to lose a day, the natives usually sow their seed on the ground, even although the waters have not entirely subsided, taking the precaution of driving a few heavy cattle over the field, to tread the corn, and imbed it in the thin mud,* so that although the surface of the ground is saturated with water, the grain, battered down by the feet of the oxen, is by this contrivance mingled with the mould, and when the water sinks, it remains in the earth and germinates.†]

* See Clarke's Travels, iii. p. 30.

† As in all sultry climates the same practice obtains, the following anecdote, though the scene of it lies in a quarter of the world remote from Palestine, may not, it is hoped, be thought inappropriate, or be found unacceptable :—'The emigrants that went from England, some years ago, to the colony of the Cape of Good Hope, were chiefly located in a district called Albany, on the confines of Caffraria. Many of them were ruined by not literally attending to the contents of this passage, "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass." They were not sufficiently aware of the indispensable necessity of water, or at least moisture under ground, to render fields at all productive in a hot and dry climate. They ploughed land, and dug a deep ditch round each field, as they had been accustomed to do in England; with the mould dug from it, they formed a mud wall, which made all look very pretty and farmer-like.

'Dutch boors from a distance came to see what they were about. These told them their fields were too far from the river; that, unless they could lead water upon them, they must not expect to have any harvest. Looking at the neat ditch, they inquired what it was for? *For* defence, was the reply. "Yes," said the boors, "it will defend your field from receiving any moisture from the surrounding ground;" and shaking their heads, said, "This is a bad defence."

'From the high ideas they had of their own superior knowledge

An Israelite was forbidden, by the law of Moses, to sow his field with mingled seeds. Maimonides discovered a particular reason for this precept, in the idolatrous customs of the ancient Zabii, who not only sowed different seeds, and grafted trees of different kinds upon each other, in certain aspects of the planets, and with certain fumigations, but also used abominable practices at the moment of incision. The existence of these impure and idolatrous rites, he proves from a book, concerning the incision of an olive into a citron; and, doubts not, that God forbade the people to sow with mingled seed, that he might root out the detestable idolatry and unnatural lusts, which abounded in those times. The person who was guilty of transgressing this law, in the opinion of the Jews, incurred the penalty of flagellation. To prevent this, on the first day of the month Adar, a proclamation was made, that every one should go forth to his field, and clear it of all heterogeneous plants which they happened to find; and, on the fifteenth of the same month, the magistrates sent messengers through the country, to see that their orders had been executed.

The seed-time is attended with considerable danger to the husbandman, in Palestine and Syria; for, although the more peaceful Arabs apply themselves to agriculture, to supply their families with grain, many of the same wandering race choose rather to procure the corn which they want by violence, than by tillage. So precarious are the fruits of the earth in Palestine,

of agriculture, they only smiled at the remarks made by the African farmers.

'The rainy season came, when the grain sprang up, and made rapid progress, while that season lasted; but, lo! the sun returned from its northern circuit, dispelled the clouds, and darted forth its unimpeded fiery rays, which soon caused the surface of the ground to become as hard as a brick; consequently the grain withered and died, and cleanness of teeth was in all their hamlets for that season. Had there been plenty of water to *lead over their fields*, the crops would probably have been most abundant.'—*African Light*, p. 108.—*Editor.*

that the farmer is often seen sowing, accompanied by an armed friend, to prevent his being robbed of the seed.* These vexatious, and often desolating incursions, are described by the prophet in the following remarkable terms, when he denounced the judgments of God against the descendants of Ammon:—'Behold, therefore, I will deliver thee to the men of the East for a possession, and they shall set their palaces in thee, and make their dwellings in thee: they shall eat thy fruit, and they shall drink thy milk.'† The practice of robbing the sower in the field, seems to have been very ancient; and is perhaps alluded to, by the Psalmist, when he encourages the righteous man to persevere in working out his salvation, in spite of the dangers to which he is exposed, by the complete success, which, in due time, shall assuredly crown his endeavours. 'They that sow in tears,' on account of the danger from the lurking and unfeeling Arabian, 'shall reap in joy.' He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.'‡ 'It is much more natural to suppose, that these verses refer to such acts of violence, than to imagine, with all the commentators who have turned their attention to this circumstance, that they allude to the anxiety of a husbandman, who sows his corn in a time of great scarcity, and is afraid his hopes may be disappointed by the failure of the succeeding harvest.'§ We no where read, that such fearful anticipations ever produced weeping and lamentation, although the orientals are very prone to violent expressions of grief. But, if we refer the passage to the danger which the farmer in those parts

* Harmer's Observations, vol. i. p. 209. Clarke's Edition. Volney's Travels, vol. ii. p. 273. The Arabian husbandmen in Palestine, in all their occupations, continue to be armed, partly because it is the fashion of the country, and partly to defend themselves against the occasional inroads of roving bands of freebooters from the neighbouring deserts.—*Buckingham's Travels*, vol. ii. p. 116.

† Ezekiel xxv. 4. ‡ Psalm cxxvi. 5, 6. § Harmer.

of the world often incurred, of loosing his precious seed, —the hope of his future subsistence, and even his life, in attempting to defend it, we have an adequate cause for his tears and lamentations. The passage contains a beautiful picture of the success, which, by the blessing of God, attended the efforts of his chosen people, to return from their captivity to the land of their fathers; and holds out a powerful encouragement to believers in Christ, to persevere in their heavenly course, notwithstanding the numerous and severe trials of this present life; for, in due time, they shall certainly enter into the rest which remains for the people of God.

[The time of committing the seed to the bosom of the earth is, as we have already said, immediately after the autumnal rains, when the twenty or thirty days of uninterrupted fine weather that succeed (and in Palestine the seasons come with the greatest regularity), call forth the most active and energetic industry of the husbandman. It is towards the end of September that these copious showers descend, and what it requires many laborious processes in Britain to accomplish, nature, by means of them, produces at once, moistens the sun-dried and parched earth, bursts the clods, levels the surface, and prepares the ground for the work of vegetation. From seed time to harvest, the fields in Palestine do not present any appearances different from other countries at the same period, excepting such as are obviously traceable to the state of agriculture and of general society, as it has always existed in the East. There the land, lying on a bed of rock and limestone, and consisting of a very loose and light soil, is liable to be washed away by the periodical rains, which often left the surface a bare and barren rock; and nothing but the extraordinary industry of its inhabitants, who collected soil from other quarters, and heaped up the stones they gathered off the fields as fences to stem the wintry torrents, could have given it that character for fertility for which it was long fa-

mous.* This state of the fields in the Holy Land, will be better understood by the description of modern travellers, who assure us, that it is still overrun with an everlasting profusion of small stones, and that those parts of it, which are under tillage, require the same laborious system of cultivation as of old. 'The appearance of the country,' says Dr Clarke, speaking of the road between Naplouse and Jerusalem, 'was mountainous, rocky, and full of loose stones; yet the cultivation was every where marvellous. It afforded one of the most striking pictures of human industry, which it is possible to behold. The limestone rocks and valleys were entirely covered with fruit, and not a spot seemed to be neglected; even the sides of the most barren mountains had been rendered fertile by being divided into terraces, like steps rising one above another, wherever soil had been accumulated, with astonishing labour. There, while the occasional rains of winter fall and preserve moisture in the ground, the grain springs up and advances with great rapidity; but when the sun returns from his northern circuit, and darts his fierce unmitigated rays, which soon dry up and make the earth as hard as a stone, the growing corn, till then so healthy and vigorous, often withers, dies, and completely disappoints the hopes of the farmer. There, owing to the absence of enclosures, and the license that is consequently taken by the public, path-ways are frequently made through the very heart of corn-fields, so that the grain which was sown in those parts with as liberal a hand as in other portions of the field, which may have begun to spring with equal exuberance, is soon trodden under foot, and totally disappears. There, owing to imperfect knowledge, or indolent negligence, the ground is, in many places, overrun with a variety of rank and stubborn weeds, which exhaust, hinder, or completely destroy

* God had specially promised to bless the land; Genesis xxvii. 29.—*Editor.*

the powers of vegetation.* There, too, flocks of small birds, invited by the exposed state of the grain, when it is first sown, and by the very slender covering of earth which the plough afterwards turns over it, are the chief pests of the oriental husbandman,—flocks that abound in such incredible numbers, that they would soon, if active measures were not taken to drive them away, leave not a single grain that had been sown. As a necessary precaution, therefore, almost every field has its protector, in the person of a man or boy, whose duty it is, with a racket or a shower of stones, by loud shouts, or any means of terror in his power, to frighten and keep off those winged and destructive visitors. How beautifully do all these circumstances, when grouped together, illustrate the parable of the sower:—'Behold, a sower went forth to sow, and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth, and forthwith they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up, they were scorched, and because they had no root, they withered away; and some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell into good ground, and brought forth, some an hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold.'

[The seed time being over, the husbandman, leaving his watchman behind him to look after his fields, generally goes his way to a distance, and does not think of returning until he calculates that the time of harvest has arrived. Such has been the immemorial usage of people in these quarters.† The absence of the owner, or the negligence of the servants, to whom he entrusts

* A few patches of sickly barley, choked by a low thorny plant, afforded the sole traces of man's being and handicraft.—*Vere Monro*, vol. ii. p. 210.—*Editor.*

† Luke xx. 9.

the oversight of his fields, is often taken advantage of by malicious enemies, to mingle the pure and healthy seed which had been sown with rank or noxious seeds. An incident, mentioned by Mr Wilson, will confirm this statement. 'The wife of religious ministers,' says he, 'is styed in Greece Mrs Priestess. On one occasion, I observed Mrs Priestess and her children during my stay in their house, appear very much indisposed, and inquired the reason. "Sir," said she, "we have eaten some *zizania*." This is the word translated *tares* in the gospel of Matthew. They had unwittingly eaten this deleterious grain; and I observed that headache and sickness were the result. This zizania is considered to be the plant called darnel, well known to the people of Syria. It grows among corn; the reapers do not separate the plant, but, after thrashing, they reject the seeds by means of a fan or sieve. So in the parable, the plant is described as growing among corn; the reapers do not separate it—but let them grow together until the harvest. According to Johnson, darnel is the first of hurtful weeds. Its leaves resemble those of wheat or barley, but spring up rougher. The grains, having scarcely any bulk, are easily scattered among the corn, where it grows.*]

'But the danger of the husbandman is not over with the seed-time; the Arabians often seize and carry off the corn and other fruits of the earth, even before they have come to maturity. Egmont and Hayman, in their travels in Galilee, found a large plain bordering on the lake of Tiberias, which was sown with rice; but to which they perceived the Arabs had already paid a visit, although the greater part of the corn was not then ripe.† They treat the fruit trees in the same manner;

* Rev. S. S. Wilson's Trav. [The same method of annoyance, viz. that of sowing tares, or some noxious weed resembling corn, in the fields belonging to those they bear ill will to, is frequently practised, when it is dark, by malicious people in India.—*Robert's Oriental Illustrations.*]—*Editor.*

† Trav. vol. ii. p. 37.

which obliges the inhabitants of those countries to watch their corn-fields and orchards, or gather their fruits before they come to maturity. Maillet ascribes the deterioration of the wines in some parts of Egypt, to their precipitation in gathering the grapes, to save them from the depredations of the Arabs.* These circumstances lead to an easy and beautiful exposition of the promise, "Behold the days come, said the Lord, that the ploughman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt;"† that is, the days shall come when the grain shall not be cut, nor the grapes gathered, as they were before, in a state of immaturity, for fear of the Arabian freebooters, or other plundering hordes; but they shall be suffered to remain till the time of ploughing, so perfect shall be the security of those times.'‡

Two bushels and an half of wheat or barley, are sufficient to sow as much ground as a pair of beeves will plough in one day; which is, a little more or less, equal to one of our acres. Dr Shaw could never learn that Barbary afforded yearly more than one crop; one bushel yielding ordinarily from eight to twelve, though some districts may perhaps afford a much greater increase, for it is common to see one grain produce ten or fifteen stalks. Even some grains of the Murwany wheat, which he brought with him to Oxford, and sowed in the physic garden, threw out each of them fifty. But Muzeratty, one of the kaleefas, or viceroy of the province of Tlemsan, brought one with him to Algiers, a root that yielded fourscore, telling Dr Shaw and his party, that in consequence of a dispute concerning the respective fruitfulness of Egypt and Barbary, the emir Hadge, or prince of the western pilgrims, sent once to the bashaw of Cairo, one that yielded six score. Pliny

* Let. viii. pp. 294, 295. † Amos, ix. 13.
‡ Harmer's Observ. vol. i. p. 213. Clarke's edition.

mentions some that bore three or four hundred.* [A recent traveller in the countries bordering on the Levant tells us, that he counted the number of stalks which sprouted from a single grain of corn, carefully pulling to pieces the root, in order to see that it was but one plant. The first had seven stalks, the next three, the next nine, then eighteen, then fourteen. Each stalk bore an ear.† Dhourra, which is a kind of corn, is well known to yield a hundred-fold; and in the southern districts of Arabia, where it abounds, it often produces four hundred-fold.‡ Even our common wheat becomes so prolific in those warm climates, that in Lebanon it yields seventy-fold, while barley generally gives a return of thirty.§] It likewise happens, that one of these stalks will sometimes bear two ears, whilst each of these ears will as often shoot out into a number of lesser ones, affording by that means a most plentiful increase. And may not these large prolific ears, when seven are said to come up upon one stalk,|| explain what is mentioned of the seven fruitful years in Egypt, that the earth brought *them* forth by handfuls?¶

It is a common practice in the East to set the dry herbage on fire before the autumnal rains; which, for want of care, often occasions great damage.** [The rea-

* Nat. Hist. lib. xviii. cap. 21.

† Jowett's Chris. Resear. ‡ Niebuhr.

§ *Egyptian Wheat.*—John Haywood, of Crossland Hill, near Huddersfield, has this year reaped the unprecedented quantity of forty-two bushels of marketable wheat from only one bushel of seed sown last December, upon a thin light sandy soil; and he has no doubt that he would have had twelve or fourteen bushels more, had not the rooks destroyed a great quantity of the seed when it was just coming up. The grower has no hesitation in saying, that, upon heavy loam or strong land suitable to the growth of wheat, this seed would produce eighty bushels from one bushel sown.—*Berwick Warder*, 1837.—*Editor.*

|| Gen. xli. 5. ¶ Shaw, vol. i. p. 252.

** This was also the practice of Italian farmers, as Virgil attests:—

> 'Sæpe etiam steriles incendere proficit agros,
> Atque levem stipulam crepitantibus urere flammis.'
>
> *Geor.* lib. i. l. 84.

son of this is stated by Bruce in the following passage:—'The Arabs feed all their flocks upon the branches of trees; no beast in this country eats grass. When, therefore, the water is dried up, and they can no longer stay, they set fire to the woods and to the dry grass below it. The flame runs under the trees, scorches the leaves and new wood, without consuming the body of the tree. After the rains begin, the vegetation immediately returns; the springs increase, the rivers run, the pools are filled with water. All sorts of verdure being now in the greatest luxuriance, the shepherds revisit their former stations. This conflagration is performed at two seasons, the first begins in the month of October, on the return of the sun; the latter, which happens in March and lasts all April, besides providing further sustenance for their flocks, is likewise intended to prevent, at least to diminish, the ravages of vermin.]

As fires of this kind were often very destructive, Moses has provided, by an express law, that reparation shall be made for the damage, whether it was occasioned by malice or neglect. 'If fire,' says the lawgiver, 'break out and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn, or the standing corn, or the field, be consumed therewith; he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution.'* ['The necessity of this law originated in the circumstance of its being a common practice in the East to set the grass and corn-fields on fire, as a means of annoying enemies; an instance of which occurs in the history of the lawless and unprincipled Absalom. He said unto his servants,—'See, Joab's field is near mine, and he hath barley there; go, and set it on fire: and Absalom's servants set the field on fire.'† These conflagrations frequently occasioned great consternation and danger; and hence, in defence of this source of danger, the promise was given,—'When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt.'‡]

The season for consuming the dry herbage and under-

* Exod. xxii. 6. † 2 Sam. xiv. 30. ‡ Isaiah xliii. 2.

growth on the mountains, is in the latter end of July, when the clouds begin to appear from the south, and indicate the approach of rain. Chandler, from whose Travels this fact is stated, often saw the fire blazing in the winds, and volumes of smoke rolling along the sides of the hills. The necessity of a law to restrain and regulate this very common and dangerous practice, is verified by an incident to which that writer was an eye-witness. Having been employed the latter end of August, in taking a plan of Troas, one day after dinner, a Turk, coming to them, emptied the ashes of his pipe, and a spark of fire fell unobserved in the grass, which was long parched by the sun, and inflammable as tinder. A brisk wind soon kindled a blaze, which withered in an instant the leaves of the bushes and trees in its way, seized the branches and roots, and devoured all before it, with prodigious crackling and noise. Chandler and his party were much alarmed, as a general conflagration of the country seemed likely to ensue. After exerting themselves for an hour, they at length extinguished the fire. [Mr Campbell relates a similarly sudden and alarming conflagration, of which he was a witness :—' It was a washing day, when the waggons were halting near water. A fire was kindled for the washers. A wind arose, which blew the flame of the fire upon some withered grass, near to which they had imprudently kindled the fire, which was soon in a blaze. In less than two minutes, the grass being so dry, the blaze reached the spot where the waggons were standing, which created great alarm, as there was a quantity of gunpowder in them. But the Hottentots, by beating the fire, as it approached, with their sheep-skin cloaks, others with branches of bushes, or whatever they could immediately obtain, kept it from getting under the waggons. In a very short time the fire had spread a mile from us, and soon thousands of acres, which formerly looked like a field of ripe oats, were covered with the black remains of the conflagration.'] These

incidents show, that the law was not only proper, but necessary, to secure the inhabitants of a scorching climate, where every combustible substance is always near the point of ignition, from utter destruction.*

Three months intervened between the seed-time and the first reaping, and a month between this and the full harvest. Barley is in full ear all over the Holy land, in the beginning of April; and about the middle of the same month, it begins to turn yellow, particularly in the southern districts; being as forward near Jericho in the latter end of March, as it is in the plains of Acre a fortnight afterwards.† The reaping, which continues till the middle of Sivan, or till about the end of May or beginning of June, which is the time of wheat harvest, finishes this part of the husbandman's labours.

The heats in the time of harvest, appear to be very oppressive, and if not carefully guarded against, sometimes prove fatal to those that are exposed in the open air. It was on a harvest day, that the Shunamite's son was struck with a sun-beam, and died in a few hours. In Egypt, the harvest commences in the latter end of April, or the first days of May, two months which Maillet represents as extremely hot.‡ Dr Pococke affirms, that Egypt is favoured with a double seed-time and harvest. Rice and Indian wheat are not sown and reaped at the same time with wheat, barley, and flax. The first are sown in March, before

* Trav. pp. 30, 31, 276.

† The general time for sowing barley in Palestine, although it is sometimes much later, being about the beginning of December, and the barley harvest commencing about the beginning of April, Our Lord made a striking and most expressive allusion to this on the occasion of his interview with the woman of Samaria:—'Say ye not, that there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest; behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields (overspread with crowds of the inhabitants of Samaria repairing to him), for they are white already to harvest (ready to embrace me as the predicted Messiah.)—*Editor.*

‡ Let. xi. pp. 109, 110.

the Nile overflows the lands, and reaped about October; the wheat and barley are sown in November and December, as soon as the Nile is gone off, and reaped before May.* Pococke's account has since been confirmed by Hasselquist, who found the rice at Assotta about three inches high, on the thirtieth of May; and in another passage, mentions the month of October as the time of reaping it; which accords with the statement of Pococke.† But Dr Shaw seems not to have been aware of this; for he supposes that rice was sown at the same time with flax, wheat, and barley; yet it is natural to suppose, that, as wheat and barley are sown as soon as the inundation is over, and reaped before it returns, so, in like manner, those sorts of grain that require much water, should be sown before it begins, and reaped just about the time of its termination.‡ Norden accordingly saw a great plain covered with Turkey wheat, nearly ripe, upon the twentieth of November; and upon the twenty-ninth of the same month, the Arabs cutting their harvest in a neighbouring plain. This fact accounts for the safety of the wheat and the rye, when Egypt was desolated by the plague of hail; they were involved in thick darkness, as the word literally signifies; that is, they were concealed, or, as our translators have justly rendered the term, they were not grown up. Parkhurst, following Dr Shaw, gives a different translation:—'But the wheat and the rye were not smitten, for they were *aphiloth*, hidden, that is, concealed or involved in the hose.' To the same purpose, the Seventy render it ὄψιμα, Vulg. serotina, late, backward. This was about the beginning of the month Abib, which answers nearly to our March, O. S.; and accordingly Dr Shaw, speaking of Egypt, says, 'Barley and wheat are usually ripe, the first about the beginning, the latter at the end of April.' And again, 'Now as wheat and rice

* Travels, vol. i. p. 204.
† Travels, part ii. pp. 17, 36.
‡ Travels, vol. ii. p. 265.

are of a slower growth than flax and barley, it usually falls out in the beginning of March that the barley is in the ear, and the flax is bolled when the wheat and the rice are not as yet grown up, or begin only to spindle.' In the plague of hail, therefore, the stalks of barley becoming pretty hard and stiff, resisted its violence, and so were broken off; whereas the wheat stalks being tender and flexible, gently yielded to the stroke of the hail, and so eluding its violence, preserved the wheat in the hose. But Mr Harmer's view is preferable; for it is evident from the text, that this terrible calamity came upon them towards the time of barley harvest; which enables us to form a judgment of the month when it happened. We are told by modern travellers, that corn in Egypt is fit for reaping in March and April; that is, the barley comes to maturity first, and is cut down in the former month, and the wheat in the latter. When Le Bruyn was in that country, the whole harvest was over at Cairo, upon the nineteenth of April.* This agrees with the account given by the sacred writer, who says that the barley was in the ear, though, as is intimated, not quite fit to be mowed; but 'the wheat and the rye were not grown up.' This judgment, therefore, must have happened about the beginning of March, before the precise time of harvest.† But, according to Pococke, Indian wheat and rice are sown in March, before the Nile overflows the lands, and reaped about October. But the wheat that is sown in March, cannot be grown up, much less begun to spindle, in that month; it must still be involved in deep darkness, or still concealed under the surface. The wheat of which Dr Shaw speaks, must be the bearded kind, which is sown in Egypt nearly about the same time with barley, and is usually ripe at the end of April; but the sacred his-

* Travels, p. 134, b. See also Maillet, Let. ix. p. 7.
† See Bryant on the Plagues of Egypt, p. 117.

torian alludes to quite a different species, which had not appeared above ground when the plague of hail descended, and so escaped its ravages.*

The reapers in Palestine and Syria make use of the sickle, in cutting down their crops; and, according to the present custom in this country, 'fill their hand' with the corn, and those who bind up the sheaves, their 'bosom.'† When the crop is thin and short, which is generally the case in light soils, and with their imperfect cultivation, it is not reaped with the sickle, but plucked up by the root with the hand. By this mode of reaping, they leave the most fruitful fields as naked as if nothing had ever grown on them; and as no hay is made in the East, this is done, that they may not lose any of the straw, which is necessary for the sustenance of their cattle.‡ The practice of reaping with the hand is perhaps involved in these words of the Psalmist, to which reference has already been made—'Let them be as the grass upon the house tops, which withereth afore it groweth up; wherewith the mower filleth not his hand, nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom.' The tops of the houses in Judea are flat, and being covered with plaster of terrace, are frequently grown over with grass. As it is but small and weak, and from its elevation exposed to the scorching sun, it is soon withered. To prevent this, they pluck it up for the use of their cattle, with the hand. A more beautiful and striking figure, to display the weak and evanescent condition of wicked men, cannot easily be conceived. They are every moment exposed to the judgments of God, like the grass on the house top, which is tossed by the breeze, and scorched by the sun, and

* Harmer's Observations, vol. iv. pp. 10, 11.

† Psalm cxxix. 7. Ruth ii 5.—They used the same instrument in Italy, as we know from Varro, de Re Rust. lib. i. cap. 50; and Columella, lib. ii. cap. 21.

‡ Maundrell's Journey, p. 144. Russel's History of Aleppo, vol. i. p. 75.

to the grasp of Omnipotence, which, weak and defence-less as they are, they can neither avoid nor resist.*

The reapers go to the field very early in the morning, and return home betimes in the afternoon. They carry provisions along with them, and leathern bottles, or dried bottle gourds, filled with water. They are followed by their own children, or by others, who glean with much success; for a great quantity of corn is scattered in the reaping, and in their manner of carrying it.†

[The grain, whether cut down by the sickle, or pulled up by the roots, is cast into sheaves, which, however, are not bound and set up in stooks,‡ nor built up afterwards in the form of a stack, carefully thatched and covered to defend it against the vicissitudes of the weather, but are loosely thrown together, to be subjected to the process of threshing, which for the most part takes place immediately after the reaping. The reapers, divided into two bands, commenced at the opposite extremities of the field, and met in the middle, a plan calculated to awaken a spirit of active diligence and rivalry among the workers. The harvest-home, or the removal of the last sheaf from the field, was a signal for the liveliest demonstrations of joy and festivity among the Jews.§]

* The sudden destruction of the wicked is described by the same writer, under another figure, not less remarkable for its force and propriety:—'I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself, like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.' In general the mode of reaping in Palestine is, as stated above, by pulling up the ripe grain by the roots, and this is practised for the sake of economy, the fodder is so scarce. When the stalks are taller, however, and straw more abundant, the work of reaping is performed by means of a sickle, larger in the hook than those in use amongst us. The corn is collected in the arm, and the operation is gone through with great expedition.—*Editor.*

† Russel's History, vol. i. p. 75.

‡ The word stack which occurs in Exod. xxii. 6, and the word shock, which occurs in Judges xv. 5, and Job. v. 26, according to our translation, are to be understood as referring to loose sheaves, as described above.—*Editor.*

§ Psa. cxxvi. 6. Isaiah xvi. 9, 10.

The greater part of these circumstances, are discernible in the manners of the ancient Israelites. Ruth had not proposed to Naomi, her mother-in-law, to go to the field, and glean after the reapers; nor had the servant of Boaz, to whom she applied for leave, so readily granted her request, if gleaning had not been a common practice in that country. When Boaz inquired who she was, his overseer, after informing him, observes, that she came out to the field in the morning;* and that the reapers left the field early in the afternoon, as Dr Russel states, is evident from this circumstance, that Ruth had time to beat out her gleanings before evening. They carried water and provisions with them; for Boaz invited her to come and drink of the water which the young men had drawn; and at meal-time, to eat of the bread, and dip her morsel in the vinegar.† And so great was the simplicity of manners in that part of the world, and in those times, that Boaz himself, although a prince of high rank in Judah, sat down to dinner, in the field with his reapers, and helped Ruth with his own hand. Nor ought we to pass over in silence, the mutual salutation of Boaz and his reapers, when he came to the field, as it strongly marks the state of religious feeling in Israel at the time, and furnishes another proof of the artless, the happy, and unsuspecting simplicity, which characterized the manners of that highly favoured people:—'And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered him, the Lord bless thee.'‡ Such a mode of salutation continued among that people till the coming of Christ; for the angel saluted Mary in language of similar import:—'Hail, highly favoured,

* It is common to begin all out of door work early in the morning, before the day becomes oppressively hot.—*Editor.*

† A kind of poor weak wine, very cooling, as would be required at harvest time.—*Editor.*

‡ Ruth ii. 4.

the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women.'*

It appears, further, from the beautiful story of Ruth, that in Palestine, the women lent their assistance in cutting down and gathering in the harvest: for Boaz commands her to keep fast by his maidens;—the women in Syria shared also in the labours of the harvest: for Dr Russel informs us, they sang the Ziraleet, or song of thanks, when the passing stranger accepted their present of a handful of corn, and made a suitable return.†

[This is a very ancient and interesting custom, of which many travellers have taken notice. Buckingham, in his journey from Aleppo to the banks of the Euphrates, says, 'In pursuing our way across the plain, we passed a party of husbandmen gathering in the harvest, the greater portion of the grain being now fully ripe. They plucked up the corn by the roots, instead of reaping it, a practice often spoken of in the Scriptures. On seeing the caravan, one of the labourers ran from his companions, and approaching us, danced, and gave other demonstrations of joy, when he presented us with an ear of corn and a flower, as an offering of the first fruits of the year; another remnant also of a very ancient usage in the 'wave offering' of the sheaf and ear of corn, commanded to the Israelites by Moses. We returned for it a handful of paras or small tin coin, and answered the shout of joy, which echoed from the field, by acclamations from the caravan.' It was, says a still more recent traveller, 'now the season of harvest, and the Arabs, who were busily employed upon the low plains to the north of Orontes, as they saw us pass, generally detached one from their party to salute us with an offering of the first fruits of their labour, and to solicit in return a trifling largess, as a tribute of our kindly feelings toward themselves.

* Luke i. 28.

† Russel's History of Aleppo, vol. i. pp. 140, 383.

A female was commonly selected for the embassy, herself the olive branch of peace.*]

It was another custom among the Jews, to set a confidential servant over the reapers, to see that they executed their work properly, that they had suitable provisions, and to pay them their wages; the Chaldees called him Rab, the master, ruler, or governor of the reapers. Such was the person who directed the labours of the reapers in the field of Boaz.

The right of the poor in Israel to glean after the reapers, was secured by a positive law, couched in these words :—'And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy land; neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and the stranger; I am the Lord your God.'† It is the opinion of some writers, that, although the poor were allowed the liberty of gleaning, the Israelitish proprietors were not obliged to admit them immediately into the field, as soon as the reapers had cut down the corn, and bound it up in sheaves, but when it was carried off; they might choose also among the poor, whom they thought most deserving, or most necessitous. These opinions receive some countenance, from the request which Ruth presented to the servant of Boaz, to permit her to glean 'among the sheaves;' and from the charge of Boaz to his young men, 'let her glean even among the sheaves;' a mode of speaking which seems to insinuate that, though they could not legally hinder Ruth from gleaning in the field, they had a right, if they chose to exercise it, to prohibit her from gleaning among the sheaves, or immediately after the reapers.

Rich and abundant as the harvests of Canaan generally were, the hopes of the husbandman were sometimes disappointed. The desolating storm and tempest not

* V. Monro's Summer Ramble, vol. ii. p. 213. † Lev. xix. 9, 10.

unfrequently received from incensed heaven, a commission, when gentler means had been tried in vain, to sweep the fields of an ungrateful or idolatrous people, and scatter destruction over the ripening harvests. To punish the stubborn heart of Pharaoh, who refused to let the people of Israel go, 'the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt, since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field; and the flax and the barley were smitten; for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was bolled.'* This, it must be admitted, was an extraordinary visitation; yet it differs but little from the description of the storms which occasionally desolate the harvests of Italy, from the pen of Virgil:—'Often have I seen when the farmer had just brought the reaper into the yellow fields, and was now binding up the barley with the brittle straw, often have I seen all the fierceness of the winds combine, which far and wide tore up the full loaded corn from the lowest roots, and tossed it up on high: just so with blackening whirlwind, a wintry storm would drive light straw, and flying stubble.'† Such is the calamity which Jehovah threatened to inflict upon his rebellious people:—'Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength; therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips; in the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish; but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief, and of desperate sorrow.'‡ [Besides, there were calamities

* Exod. ix. 23, 24, 25, 31.
† Geor. lib. i. l. 316. &c.
‡ Isaiah xvii. 10, 11.

originating in the excessive heat of the climate, the blight, and the mildew, occasioned by the dry hot winds, which sometimes blow their withering breath over the standing corn ; the hoar-frost, and the thunder storms, which are followed by terrible showers of hail, or rather lumps of ice, which break and batter down the stalks to the ground.] The harvests of Canaan were exposed to the ravages of another enemy still more destructive ; this was the locust, which, in overwhelming numbers, invaded the country, and with insatiable greediness devoured every green thing ; but the ravages of this terrible insect have been already described. But these were only occasional visitations ; the God of nature, who, remembering his covenant with the seed-time and the harvest, blessed the springing of the earth, for the most part crowned the year with his goodness, filled the barns of his chosen people with plenty, and caused their presses burst out with new wine.*

When the corn is reaped, it is carried on asses† to the summit of the nearest rising ground or hill, where it is laid in a heap on a spot prepared for the purpose. The thrashing floor, which was commonly on the harvest field, is carefully levelled with a huge cylindric roller, and wrought with the hand, and consolidated with chalk, that weeds may not spring up, and that it may not chap with drought. Such is the method which Virgil, in his first Georgic, recommended to the Italian farmer, and which he probably borrowed from the Grecian or eastern cultivator.‡

In Palestine, as in Greece and Italy, the floor was for the most part in the open air. Thus the thrashing floor of Gideon appears to have been an open uncover-

* Prov. iii. 10.

† In a later age it was carried home in waggons or carts. Isaiah xxviii. 27, 28 ; Amos xi. 13.—*Editor.*

‡ Iliad, lib. xx. l. 495. Varro de Re Rust. lib. i. cap. 51. Columella de Re Rust. lib. ii. cap. 20.

ed space, upon which the dews of heaven fell without interruption :—'I will put a fleece of wool in the floor, and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry on all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said.'* But a barn, or covered space, had been unfit for such an experiment. The thrashing floor of Araunah the Jebusite seems also to have been an open area, else it had not been a proper place for erecting an altar, and offering sacrifice. In the prophecies of Hosea, the idolaters of Israel are compared to the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor.† Hence it was designedly prepared in a place to which the wind had free access on all sides ; and from this exposed situation, it derived its name in Hebrew. In Greece, the same kind of situation was chosen ; for Hesiod advises his farmer to thrash his corn in a place well exposed to the wind.‡ From this statement, it appears that a thrashing floor (rendered in our translation a void place) might well be formed near the gate of Samaria, which was built on the summit of a hill ; and afford a very convenient place for the kings of Israel and Judah giving audience to the prophets.§

The method of thrashing out the grain, varied according to the species. Isaiah mentions four different instruments,—the flail, the drag, the wain, and the feet of the ox. The staff, or flail, was used for the smaller seeds, which were too tender to be treated in the other methods. The drag consisted of a sort of strong planks, made rough at the bottom with hard stones or iron ; it was drawn by oxen, or horses, over the corn sheaves spread on the floor, the driver sitting upon it. The wain, or cart, was much like the former, but had wheels, with iron teeth or edges like a saw. From the

* Judges vi. 37. † Hosea xiii. 3.

‡ Hesiod. Opera et Dies. l. 598, 599, 1806. And Varro gives the same advice to the Roman farmer. De Re Rust. lib. i. cap. 51.

§ See 1 Kings xxii. 10 ; and 2 Chron. xviii. 9.

statement of different authors, it would seem that the axle was armed with iron teeth, or serrated wheels, throughout. Niebuhr gives a description and print of such a machine, used at present in Egypt for the same purpose; it moves upon three rollers, armed with iron teeth or wheels to cut the straw.* [Captain Light gives a particular account of it, as he saw it in 1814:—'A frame of four feet wide, and as many high, consisting of three sides, was placed on wooden rollers, serving as axles to a number of thin circular iron plates, put in motion by a couple of oxen, driven by a boy, who sat on a cross bar above the rollers, and moved over the straw as it lay in heaps on the ground, after the grain had been trodden out.' †] In Syria, they make use of the drag, constructed in the very same manner as before described. This not only forced out the grain, but also cut the straw in pieces, which is used in this state over all the East as fodder for the cattle.‡

The Israelitish farmer, endowed with discretion from above, made use of all these instruments in separating from the chaff the various produce of his field:—'For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him. For the fitches are not thrashed with a thrashing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod. Bread-corn is bruised; because he will not ever be thrashing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen. This also cometh forth from the Lord

* Voyage en Arabie, Tab. xvii. p. 123; et Description, &c. p. 140. See also Varro de Re Rust. lib. i. cap. 50 and 52; and Columella de Re Rust. lib. ii. cap. 21.

† Light's Travels, p. 46.

‡ Virgil also mentions the slow rolling wains of the Eleusinian mother, the planks and sleds for pressing out the corn, and harrows of unwieldy weight:—

'Tardaque Eleusinæ matris volventia plaustra,
Tribulaque, traheæque, et iniquo pondere rastri.'

Geor. lib. i. l. 164.

of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.'* In the early periods of the Jewish commonwealth, however, these various methods, adapted to the different kinds of grain, were unknown; the husbandman employed the staff or flail in thrashing all his crop. When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he found him thrashing wheat by the wine-press with a staff, for so the original term signifies; and after Ruth had gleaned in the field till the evening, she beat out with a staff what she had gleaned. The Seventy render the verb in both passages, by the Greek word ραβδιζειν, to beat with a rod; but the natural sagacity of the human mind, directed by the finger of God, at last invented the other more efficacious implements, to which Isaiah so frequently refers in the course of his writings. He compares Moab, in the day of their overthrow, to straw which is trodden down under the wain;† and he promises to furnish his oppressed people with the same powerful instrument, which we translate a new sharp thrashing instrument having teeth, that they may thrash the mountains, and beat them small, and make the hills as chaff; or dropping the metaphor, he promises them complete victory over their numerous and powerful enemies, who should be given by the Lord of hosts as driven stubble to their bow, and swept away before the armies of Israel as chaff before the whirlwinds of the south.

But one of the most common methods of thrashing employed in the East, was by the feet of oxen or other beasts of burden. The law of Moses, with its characteristic benevolence and attention to the feelings even of the lower animals, provides for the sustenance and comfort of the ox, when engaged in this laborious service, by an express enactment:—'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox, when he treadeth out the corn;'‡ and to this day the cattle employed in the Syrian harvest are left unmuzzled at the heap, to feed at will on the bounties

* Isa. xxviii. 26-28. † Isa. xxv. 10. ‡ Deut. xxv. 4.

of nature, which their labour serves to procure. 'The natives of Aleppo,' says Dr Russel, 'to this day religiously observe the ancient custom of allowing the oxen employed in separating the corn from the straw, to eat what they please.' 'I noticed,' says the Rev. Mr Hartley, 'two sets of oxen, four abreast, the one set following the other in a circle; and while as they took out the grain, continued eating. I inquired of the men why they permitted the oxen to eat? they replied, it is contrary to our customs to muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.'* Hosea compares the people of Israel to 'an heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the corn.'† Nor can a doubt be entertained that Jehovah alludes to this custom in his invitation to the church:—'Arise and thrash, O daughter of Zion, for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass; and thou shalt beat in pieces many people; and I will consecrate their grain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth.'‡ We learn from Cyril of Alexandria, that the Egyptians, having carried their sheaves from the field into the thrashing floor, send in oxen upon them, and lead them round to tread out the corn with their hoofs.§

This is a much quicker way than our method of beating out the corn with the flail, but less cleanly; for, as

* Hartley's Researches, p. 366. † Hos. x. 11. ‡ Micah iv. 13.

§ This custom was followed in Greece from the earliest times, as Homer attests:—

Ὡς δ' οτε ζευξη βοας αρσενας ευρυμετωπες, etc.
Il. lib. xx. l. 495.

'As when one joins bulls with broad foreheads in the yoke, that in the circular area they may tread out the white barley, and under the feet of the lowing oxen, the grain may instantly become small.' It was still the practice of the Greeks, in the time of Xenophon, who says the cattle tread out the corn when they are stimulated; and, further, that persons are appointed to conduct the oxen, to turn the sheaves, and subject those which are not sufficiently trodden again to the feet of the cattle, that the more refractory spikes may be equally thrashed, and the whole work more speedily accomplished. In modern Turkey, the custom of treading out the corn by oxen is still practised.

it is performed in the open air, upon any round level plot of ground, daubed over with cow dung, to prevent as much as possible the earth, sand, or gravel, from rising;—a great quantity of them all, notwithstanding these precautions, must unavoidably be taken up with the grain; at the same time the straw, which is their only fodder, is by this means shattered to pieces.* To this circumstance the sacred historian alludes, with great force and propriety, in his brief description of the wretched state to which the kingdom of the ten tribes had been reduced by the arms of Hazael king of Syria:—'Neither did he leave of the people to Jehoahaz but fifty horsemen, and ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen; for the king of Syria had destroyed them, and had made them like the dust by thrashing.'†

After the grain is trodden out, they winnow it by throwing it up against the wind with a shovel—the το πτυον of the gospels according to Matthew and Luke, there rendered a fan, which is too cumbersome a machine to be intended by the evangelist.‡ The text should rather run, whose shovel or fork, the οργανον οδοντικον (which is a portable instrument), is in his hand, agreeably to the practice recorded by Isaiah, who mentions both the shovel and the fan:—'The oxen likewise, and the young asses that ear the ground, shall eat clean provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan.'§

* Lowth on Isaiah, vol. ii. pp. 162, 192, 204.

† 2 Kings xiii. 7. Shaw's Travels vol. i. p. 255.

‡ Columella de Re Rust. lib, ii. cap. 21. [The fan was a cumbersome machine as used by the Romans, to whose practice Columella's description applied. But it is not so in the East, being there employed not only by farmers to waft away the chaff from the corn, but by women every morning, who by this means separate the husks from the rice they prepare for the daily consumption of their families. Lowth renders the above passage of Isaiah, 'which hath been winnowed' by 'the fan and the sieve.' We may add, that the eastern fan, made of the fibrous part of the leaves of the palm tree, is light and manageable, and resembles in form the small letter n when the legs are joined below thus ∩.]—*Editor.*

§ Isaiah xxx. 24. Shaw's Travels, vol. i. p. 255.

The image of thrashing is frequently used by the Hebrew poets with great elegance and effect, to express the punishments of wicked, and the trials of righteous men, or the utter dispersion and ruin of those who continue in their sins. 'How often,' cried Job, 'is the candle of the wicked put out? And how oft cometh their destruction upon them? God distributeth sorrows in his anger. They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away.'* The Psalmist uses the same figure, in the first Psalm :—'The ungodly are not so; but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.' To finish the picture of entire dispersion, the prophet Isaiah joins with it another figure equally beautiful and striking, taken from the cloud of very small dust, which rises from the thrashing floor by the action of the machines, or the feet of the cattle, and is so light and attenuated that it is dispersed by the gentlest breath of wind. 'Moreover, the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as chaff that passeth away; yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly.'† In another passage, he addresses his nation in these encouraging terms :—'Thou shalt thrash the mountains and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them.'‡ [Jeremiah uses this figure to represent the rejection of the Jews. Speaking as the Lord's messenger, and in his Master's name, he says, 'I will fan them with a fan in the gates of the land.'§ The same prophet employs this metaphorical idea in another place to describe the overthrow of Babylon. 'Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me, a destroying wind: and will send unto Babylon fanners, that shall fan her, and shall empty her land.'‖] The

* Job xxi. 17, 18. † Isaiah xxix. 5. ‡ Isaiah xli. 15, 16.
§ Jeremiah xv. 7. ‖ Jeremiah li. 1, 2.

prophet Hosea warned his people, that if they turned aside to the worship of false gods, they 'should be as the morning cloud and as the early dew, which passeth away; as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney.'* Alluding to the same circumstance, the prophet Daniel compares the broken pieces of Nebuchadnezzar's image, to the chaff of the summer thrashing floor carried away by the wind. [And, lastly, John the Baptist employs the same figure most effectively to show the work on which the Saviour was about to enter, that of preparing a people for himself, and utterly destroying the wicked. 'Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.'† The last circumstance mentioned in this verse alludes to the practice of consuming with fire the mass of chaff which had not been borne away by the wind, and using the ashes for manure,—a fire feeding on such materials being inextinguishable.]

These circumstances clearly illustrate some of the details in the book of Ruth. Boaz, for example, was a person of considerable wealth and high rank in the tribe of Judah, for he was descended in a direct line from Naason, the prince of that powerful family; yet he seems, after the fatigues of the day, to have laid himself down to sleep on the barn floor, an area in the open air at some distance from his dwelling, at the end of the heap of barley which he had been winnowing; such was the simplicity of manners in those days, even among the nobles of Judah. The custom has descended to present times; for the Persian villagers also pass the night at their thrashing floors in the fields.‡ [It

* Hosea xiii. 3. † Matthew iii. 12.

‡ Memoir of Mr Martyn, p. 401. The close of the day is the most favourable time for winnowing in Palestine, and all warm countries like it, especially those that border on the sea, as the intense heat of the day is succeeded by a brisk gale towards evening,

appears from the sacred story that Boaz took his supper there, as well as rested all night, the reason of which is to be sought in the peculiar customs of farmers in the East. There the corn not being built up in stacks, but allowed to lie on the spot where it is reaped, is carried to the adjoining thrashing-floor, which being also exposed on all sides, except a slender covering on the top, it is indispensable that persons should sleep beside the corn, both to guard it, and continue their work till late in the evening, and this duty at so important a season the master undertakes himself.]

As the sheep-shearing was enlivened with rural festivities in the East, so was the thrashing out and winnowing of the corn; for Naomi directs her daughter-in-law to wash and anoint herself, and put on her raiment, and go down to the floor, but not to make herself known to the man, till he should have done eating and drinking; and, accordingly, it is noted in a following verse, 'That when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn.' Such entertainments were, perhaps, different from the feast of ingathering, which closed the labours of the year; for in Palestine, the barley harvest is ten days or a fortnight before the wheat harvest, and therefore this feast could not be the feast of ingathering, but a previous entertainment.*

After the grain is winnowed, they lodge it in subterraneous magazines, as was formerly the custom of other nations; two or three hundred of these receptacles are sometimes to be found together, the smallest holding four hundred bushels.† These grottos are dug in the

and this explains the passage where it is said of Boaz, behold he winnoweth barley to-night in the thrashing floor. Ruth iii. 2.—*Editor.*

* The ancient Romans, in like manner, were accustomed to sing a hymn to Ceres before putting the sickle to the corn; and when the harvest was gathered in, they every where resigned themselves to joy and singing.—*Geor.* lib. i. l. 348.

† Shaw's Trav. vol. i. pp. 255, 256. Russel's Hist. of Aleppo, vol. i. p. 76.

form of an oven, gradually enlarging towards the bottom, with one round opening at top ; and this being close shut when the magazine is full, is covered over with earth, so as to remain perfectly concealed from an enemy. These magazines are sometimes discovered in the midst of a ploughed field ; sometimes on the verge, and even in the middle of the highway. The same kind of granaries are used in Palestine as in Syria. Le Bruyn speaks of a number of deep pits at Rama, which he was told were designed for corn :* and Rauwolf, of three very large vaults at Joppa, where the inhabitants laid up their corn, when he was in that country.† The treasures of the field, consisting of wheat and of barley, of oil and of honey, which were offered to Ishmael as a ransom for the lives of his captives, were undoubtedly laid up in the same kind of repositories.‡ In dangerous and unsettled times like those of Jeremiah, it is quite common, even at present, for the Arabs to secure their corn and other effects, which they cannot carry along with them, in deep pits or subterraneous grottos. Sir John Chardin, in a note upon this very passage of the prophet, says, ' The eastern people in many places hide their corn in these concealments.' [To preserve the grain in very wet and inclement seasons, as well as to hide it in times of anarchy and danger, the people of the East have made use, from time immemorial, of such subterranean pits dug in the fields or the highway, as are described in the preceding paragraph, and as, when the corn is taken out, those are generally left empty and uncovered, they render the ground exceedingly dangerous for travellers. But otherwise the people of those countries are accustomed to lay up their grain on the surface of the ground, in covered heaps similar to the way in which potatoes are preserved in country places amongst us. Sir Robert Wilson describes them

* Trav. vol. ii. pp. 149, 150.

† Trav. vol. i. p. 227. The same custom is noticed by Varro, de Re Rust. lib. i. cap. 57.

‡ Jer. xli. 8.

in the following passage: 'The magazines of corn in Egypt are formed on the outside of the city walls, otherwise they would be too extended for the inhabitants to defend. The property of each village is deposited in one place, every individual owner heaping up his own rick, and keeping it distinct from that of his neighbour by preserving a path round. And when they are thus covered over with a heap of earth, they are usually sealed, as an additional security for the preservation of their property, a small door or entrance being made for the more convenient removal of whatever quantity they may require to take out. The seal consists of clay, which, hardened by the sun, retains an impression in eastern countries much longer than in our more humid and variable climate, and it seems to have been a very ancient practice to secure their treasures of corn in this way, as it is undoubtedly this which Job had in his eye when describing the material world as taking its form from the plastic hand of its Maker, he says, "it is turned as clay to the seal."'*] To these various customs the Baptist alludes in his solemn warning to the multitudes concerning Christ:—'Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but the chaff will he burn with unquenchable fire.'† And our Lord himself, in his parable of the good seed:—'Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn.'‡

The corn which they reserve for daily use, they keep in long earthen jars; because, when kept in sacks or barrels, it is liable to be eaten by worms. This is confirmed by Norden, who tells us, that, when he was travelling in Upper Egypt, one of the natives opened a great jar, in order to shew him how they preserved

* Job. xxxviii. 14. † Mat. iii. 12.

‡ Mat. xiii. 30. Volney's Trav. vol. ii. p. 273. So also Joel:—'The garners are laid desolate; the barns are broken down, for the corn is withered,' i. 17.

their corn there. In some regions of the East Indies, the paddy or rice in the husk is also preserved in large earthen jars, that are kept in the house; or in small cylindrical stores, which the potters make of clay; the mouth is covered with an inverted pot; and the paddy is drawn out of a hole at the bottom, as it is wanted.*

It seems to have been in one of these earthen jars, that the woman of Zarephath kept her corn, of which she had only enough left, when the prophet Elijah applied to her for a morsel of bread, to make an handful of meal.† In our translation, the original term, *chad*, is rendered barrel; but a barrel, properly speaking, it could not be, because a vessel of that sort is never used for holding corn in those regions. Neither could it be a chest, although this is often used in the East for preserving corn; because the Hebrew term is quite different. In the second book of Kings, it is stated that 'Jehoiada the priest took *aron*, a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar.'‡ The same word is employed by Moses to denote a coffin; but most generally to signify the chest, or ark of the testimony, on which the cherubim stood in the holy of holies. This term among the Hebrews, therefore, properly signified a chest made of wood, never a vessel for holding water. But *chad* they commonly used to signify a jar or pitcher for holding water, which was made of earth, never of wood. It is the same word in the original, which the sacred historian employs to denote the vessels in which Gideon's army concealed their torches, and which they brake with a clashing terrific noise, when they blew with their trumpets. Both these circumstances suppose they were vessels of earth, which are employed in the East, for the double purpose of preserving corn and holding water. The *chad* was also the vessel with which Rebecca went out to fetch

* Trav. vol. ii. p. 119. Hesiod also directs the Greeks to preserve their corn in the same way.—*Opera et Dies.* l. 600. Harmer's Observ. vol. i. p. 277.

† 1 Kings xvii. 11. ‡ 2 Kings, xii. 9.

water from the well; which, in our translation, is rendered pitcher. But the orientals never carried a barrel to the fountain, nor drew water with a wooden vessel. Hence the barrel in which the woman of Zarephath kept her corn, was in reality an earthen jar. The four barrels of water, then, which Elijah commanded his attendants to pour on the sacrifice,* should have been translated four jars or pitchers; for the original word is the same in all these instances.†

In temperate latitudes, the fields are generally covered with durable verdure; but in Asia, gramineous plants of all kinds are extremely perishable. The wonderful rapidity of their growth is celebrated by every traveller into the East. Sir Thomas Roe says, that, when the ground has been destitute of rain nine months together, and looks all of it like the barren sand in the deserts of Arabia, where there is not one spire of green grass to be found, within a few days after those fat enriching showers begin to fall, the face of the earth there (as it were by a new resurrection) is so revived, and throughout so renewed, as that it is presently covered all over with a pure green mantle.‡ Dr Russel, in the same admiring terms, describes the springing of the earth as a resurrection of vegetable nature.§ Vegetation is so extremely quick in Hindostan, that, as fast as the water rises, the plants of rice grow before it, so that the ear is never immersed.‖ To the powerful influence of the rain upon the face of oriental nature, Moses compares, with singular beauty and force, the effect which the lessons of heavenly wisdom produce in the human mind:—'My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon

* 1 Kings, xviii. 33.

† See Harmer's Observ. vol. ii. p. 267; and vol. iv. p. 250. Pococke's Trav. vol. ii. pp. 61, 62. And Chandler's Trav. p. 21.

‡ Voyage to the East Indies, p. 360.

§ History of Aleppo, vol. i. p. 63, &c.

‖ Maurice's Indian Antiquities, vol. i. p. 98.

the grass.'* Even the dews, which are most copious in those regions, produce a change so beneficial and sudden, that Solomon compares to their energy, the influence of royal favour, which, in oriental courts, frequently raises, in one day, a person from the lowest condition, to the highest ranks of life:—'The king's 'favour is as dew upon the grass.'† But such extraordinary quickness of growth is incompatible with strength and permanence; the feeble and sickly blade yields as quickly to the burning heat, and vanishes away. To this rapid change, the Psalmist compares the short-lived prosperity of wicked men;‡ his own evanescent comforts;§ the swift progress of his days,‖ and of time in general.¶ So soon are the powers of nature exhausted, that the grass does not always come to maturity, even in the best soils; in the language of ancient prophecy, 'it is blasted before it be grown up.'** [The very affecting images of scripture, which compare the short-lived existence of man to the decay of the vegetable creation, are scarcely understood in this country. The verdure is perpetual in England. It is difficult to discover a time, when it can be said, the *grass withereth*. But let the traveller visit the beautiful plains of the East in the month of May, and revisit them toward the end of June, and he will perceive the force and beauty of these allusions. In May, an appearance of fresh verdure, and of rich luxuriance every where meets the eye; the face of nature is adorned with a carpet of flowers, and herbage of the most elegant kind. But a month or six weeks subsequently, how changed is the entire scene; the beauty is gone; the grass is withered; the flower is faded; a brown and dusty desert has taken place of a delicious garden. It is doubtless to this rapid transformation of nature that the Scriptures compare the fate of man.††]

* Deut. xxxii. 2. † Proverbs xix. 11. ‡ Psalm xxxvii. 2.
§ Psalm cii. 4. ‖ Psalm cii. 11. ¶ Psalm xc. 5.
** 2 Kings xix. 26; Isaiah xxxvii. 27; Psalm cxxix. 6.
†† Hartley's Researches.

This may be one reason, why hay is seldom or never made in the East.* In our version, indeed, the Psalmist foretold, that the blessings of the promised Messiah shall come down like rain upon the 'mown grass;' and the prophet Amos, describing the judgment of the grasshoppers, expresses himself in this manner:—'Thus hath the Lord God showed unto me; and, behold, he formed grasshoppers in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth; and, lo, it was the latter growth, after the king's mowings.'† But the contradiction is in our translation, not in the original Scriptures, which perfectly correspond with the fact. The Hebrew terms *gez*, and *gizze*, of which the first is rendered in our own version mown, and the last, mowings, come from a root which signifies to take off, or take away; applied to corn or grass, to cut down, or to cut short, particularly by the teeth of animals; it signifies, therefore, to browse or feed; and, in the first instance, seems rather to mean grass that has been eaten down, which is precisely the view given of the word in the Targum, grass eaten down by the locusts; and, in the second, may be rendered feedings or grazings, that is, the time, which was probably in March, when the king's cattle were led out to graze in the common pastures of Judea. The vision of Amos represented to him the coming of locusts to eat up the pastures, as soon as the king's horses were withdrawn, and the inhabitants hoped to enjoy the plenty of April and May, before the scorching heat of summer burnt up the grass.‡

If these observations be just, our version of that proverb must be improper:—'The *hay* appeareth, and the tender grass showeth itself, and the herbs of the mountains are gathered.'§ The gross impropriety, indeed,

* Shaw's Travels, vol. i. p. 254. [Neither hay nor oats are known to the Turks; nor has any nation in the East ever used them for their horses.—*Clarke's Travels*, vol. iii. p. 234.]—*Editor.*

† Amos vii. 1.

‡ See Harmer's Observations, vol. iv. p. 394.

§ Proverbs xxvii. 25.

appears from the very arrangement imputed to the inspired writer; for, with what justice can hay, which is grass cut and dried after it has come to maturity, be made to precede, or be even associated with the tender grass, which is but just beginning to show itself? It is certainly the design of Solomon in this passage, which is highly poetical, to describe the beautiful progress of vegetation, which must have filled an eastern beholder, whose aching eye had wandered so long over a bare and sterile waste, with equal joy and wonder. Calmet, therefore, proposes another version, which accords at once with the fact stated by travellers, and the purpose of the royal preacher :—'*The tender risings of the grass are in motion; and the buddings of grass* (grass in its early state, as is the peculiar import of DESHA), *appear, and the tufts of grass* proceeding from the same root, *collect themselves* together, and by their union begin to clothe *the mountain* tops with a pleasing verdure.'*

In the language of the Hebrews, every place where plants and trees were cultivated with greater care than in the open field, was called a garden. The idea of such an enclosure was certainly borrowed from the garden of Eden, which the bountiful Creator planted for the reception of his favourite creature. The garden of the Hesperides, in eastern fables, was protected by an enormous serpent; and the gardens of Adonis, among the Greeks, may be traced to the same origin; for the terms '*horti Adonides*,' the gardens of Adonis, were used by the ancients to signify gardens of pleasure, which corresponds with the name of Paradise, or the garden of Eden, as *horti Adonis* answers to the garden of the Lord. Besides, the gardens of primitive nations were commonly, if not in every instance, devoted to religious purposes. In these shady retreats were celebrated, for a long succession of ages, the rites of Pagan superstition. Thus Jehovah calls the apostate

* Taylor's Calmet, vol. iii.

Jews, 'a people that provoked me continually to anger to my face, that sacrificeth in gardens.'* And, in a preceding chapter, the prophet threatens them in the name of the Lord:—'They shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens which ye have chosen.' The inspired writer not only mentions these gardens, but also makes a clear allusion to the tree of life, or rather of knowledge, both of which were placed in the midst of Paradise: 'They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens, behind one (tree) in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the Lord.' The garden of Eden was planted by Jehovah, for the accommodation of the first pair, but chiefly for religious purposes. It was meant as a school of religious instruction, where, in the external and sensible objects around them, and particularly in the seals of his covenant, the tree of knowledge and the tree of life, they might read the character of their God; might contemplate the variety and loveliness of his perfections, the purity of his nature, the riches of his bounty, the minuteness of his care, the watchfulness of his providence, and the ineffably higher delights which awaited them in his immediate presence, if they persevered in their obedience.

The oriental gardens were either open plantations, or enclosures defended by walls or hedges. Rauwolf found, about Tripoli, many gardens and vineyards, enclosed for the most part with hedges, and separated by shady walks.† Some fences in the Holy Land, in later times, are not less beautiful than our living fences of white thorn; and perfectly answer the description of ancient Jewish prophets, who inform us, that the hedges in their times consisted of thorns, and that the spikes of these thorny plants were exceedingly sharp. Doubdan found a very fruitful vineyard, full of olives,

* Isaiah lxv. 3. † Travels, pp. 21, 22.

fig-trees, and vines, about eight miles south-west from Bethlehem, enclosed with a hedge; and that part of it adjoining to the road, strongly formed of thorns and rose bushes, intermingled with pomegranate trees of surpassing beauty and fragrance.* A hedge composed of rose bushes and wild pomegranate shrubs, then in full flower, mingled with other thorny plants, adorned in the varied livery of spring, must have made at once a strong and beautiful fence. The wild pomegranate tree, the species probably used in fencing, is much more prickly than the other variety; and when mingled with other thorny bushes, of which they have several kinds in Palestine, some, whose prickles are very long and sharp, must form a hedge very difficult to penetrate. These facts illustrate the beauty and force of several passages in the sacred volume; thus, in the Proverbs of Solomon, 'The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns;'† it is obstructed with difficulties, which the sloth and indolence of his temper represent as galling or insuperable; but which a moderate share of resolution and perseverance would easily remove or surmount. In the prophecies of Hosea, God threatens his treacherous and idolatrous people with many painful embarrassments and perplexities, which would as effectually retard or obstruct their progress in the paths of wickedness, as a hedge of thorny plants stretching across the traveller's way, the prosecution of his journey:—'Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths.'‡ In the days of Micah, the magistrates of Judah had become exceedingly corrupt:—'The best of them is a brier; the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge.' To appear before their tribunal, or to have any dealings with them, was to involve one's self in endless perplexities, to expose one's self to galling disappointments, if not to certain

* Voy. dans la Palest. pp. 154, 155.
† Prov. xv. 19. ‡ Hosea ii. 6.

destruction. They resembled those thorny plants, which are twisted together, whose spines point in every direction, and are so sharp and strong, that they cannot be touched without danger, and so entangling, that, when the traveller has with much pain and exertion freed himself from one, he is instantly seized by another. 'But the sons of Belial,' said the king of Israel, 'shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands: But the man that shall touch them, must be fenced with iron, and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place.'* The armies of Assyria that came up against the kingdom of Judah in the reign of Hezekiah, are compared also to thorns, because they entangled one another, exasperated one another's passions, inflamed their mutual hatred of God and his chosen people, confirmed their mutual insensibility and hardness of heart; and therefore Jehovah declares, 'they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry:' since they cannot be disentangled nor touched with safety, they shall be consumed together, as a thicket of thorny plants in the raging flame.†

Other enclosures have fences of loose stones, or mud walls, some of them very low, which often furnish a retreat to venemous reptiles.‡ To this circumstance the

* 2 Sam. xxiii. 6, 7.

† The strong defence which thorny hedges afforded, and the impossibility of penetrating them, appears from its being the favourite mode of protection adopted still in many parts of Palestine, where the peaceable inhabitants are exposed to the predatory incursions of the Arabs. 'As we rode through Riblah,' says Mr Buckingham, 'we perceived it to be a settlement of about fifty dwellings, every one of which was fenced in front with thorny bushes, while a barrier of the same kind encircled the whole of the town. This was one of the most effectual defences which they could have raised against the attacks of horse Arabs, the only enemies which they have to dread, as neither will the horse approach to entangle himself in these thickets of briar, nor could the rider, even if he dismounted, get over them, or remove them to clear a passage, without assistance from some one within.'—*Travels in Palestine.—Editor.*

‡ Doubdan Voy. pp. 154, 155; and Rauwolf, p. 236.

royal preacher alludes, in his observations on wisdom and folly :—'He that diggeth a pit, shall fall into it ; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him.'* The term which our translators render hedge in this passage, they might with more propriety have rendered wall, as they had done in another part of the writings of Solomon :—'I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding ; and, lo ! it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.'†

The land of promise has been, from the earliest ages, an unenclosed country, with a few spots defended by a hedge of thorny plants, or a stone wall built without any cement. At Aleppo, most of the vineyards are fenced with stone walls; for in many parts of Syria, a hedge would not grow for want of moisture. But, as their various esculent vegetables are now not unfrequently planted in the open fields, both in Syria and Palestine, so Chardin, in his manuscript, seems to suppose they were often unfenced in ancient times; and on this account, those lodges and booths, to which Isaiah refers, in the first chapter of his prophecy, were built. In Hindostan they follow the same custom. 'At the commencement of the rainy season, the peasants plant abundance of melons, cucumbers, and gourds, which are then the principal food of the inhabitants. They are planted in the open fields and extensive plains, and are therefore liable to the depredations of men and beasts. In the centre of the field is an artificial mount with a hut on the top, sufficiently large to shelter a single person from the inclemency of the weather. There amid heavy rains and tempestuous winds, a poor solitary being is stationed day and night to protect the crop. From thence he gives an alarm

* Eccles. x. 8. The prophet Nahum describes the locust also as well as the serpent loving to camp in the hedges, in the cold day.—*Editor.*

† Prov. xxiv. 30.

to the nearest village. Few situations can be more unpleasant than a hovel of this kind, exposed for three or four months to wind, lightning, and rain. To such a cheerless station the prophet, no doubt, alludes in that passage where he declares the desolations of Judah:—'The daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers.'* If such watch houses were necessary in those gardens which were defended by walls or hedges, some of which, indeed, it was not difficult to get over, they must have been still more necessary, in those which were perfectly open. [It was in allusion to these structures, or posts of observation for watchmen, that our Lord says in the parable, 'A certain man planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it, and digged a place for the wine fat, and built a *tower*, and let it out to husbandmen.'] Several travellers have mentioned such improved spots, which they met with in their progress, and have expressly specified the cucumber as one of the plants cultivated in such exposed places; which throws an additional light on the words of the prophet: the daughter of Zion is deserted, as a mean and temporary booth, in a garden of cucumbers, which had neither wall nor hedge, but lay exposed on all sides to the depredations of evil doers. Besides a variety of esculent vegetables, the vine was frequently to be seen in these cultivated patches loaded with its richest produce; which must be doubly welcome to those who travel in a thinly peopled, or desolate country. To these inviting clusters, the prophet Hosea seems to refer, in the following declaration:—'I found

* Isaiah i. 8. Forbes' Oriental Memoirs, vol. ii. p. 450. 'The village of Bethlehem,' says Mr Monro, 'is surrounded by plantations of fig-trees and vineyards, and upon the different heights are placed those "lodges," or watch-towers, introduced by Isaiah, as emblems of desolateness; and the appearance of them fully justifies the comparison; for placed far apart from each other, they guard rather over districts than particular gardens, and thoroughly convey the image which the prophet intended to represent.—*Summer Ramble in Syria.—Editor.*

Israel like grapes in the wilderness.' The meaning is not, I found Israel when they were in the wilderness pleasant to me as grapes; but, as grapes found in the wilderness, are exceedingly pleasing to the hungry or parched traveller, so has Israel been to me. In Arabia, and probably in other parts of the East, instead of a solitary watchman in the middle of the plantation, they place guards at certain distances round the whole field, increasing or diminishing their numbers according to the supposed danger. This custom furnishes a clear and easy explanation of a passage in the prophecies of Jeremiah, where he solemnly warns his people of their approaching calamities: 'As keepers of a field, are they against her round about; because she hath been rebellious against me, saith the Lord.'*

The oriental garden displays little method, beauty, or design; the whole being commonly no more than a confused medley of fruit trees, with beds of esculent plants, and even plots of wheat and barley sometimes interspersed.† The garden belonging to the governor of Eleus, a Turkish town, on the western border of the Hellespont, which Dr Chandler visited, consisted of a very small spot of ground, walled in, and containing only two vines, a fig and a promegranate tree, and a well of excellent water.‡ And it would seem, the garden of an ancient Israelite could not boast of greater variety; for the grape, the fig, and the pomegranate, are almost the only fruits which it produced. This fact may perhaps give us some insight into the

* Jer. iv. 17. See Chardin and Harmer's Observations, vol. i. p. 217–219.

† The gardens of Palestine are described by a modern writer, 'to be nothing else but a confused miscellany of trees jumbled together, without either knots, walks, arbours, or any thing of art or design, so that they seem like thickets rather than gardens.'—*Editor.*

‡ Travels, p. 16.

reason of the sudden and irresistible conviction which flashed on the mind of Nathaniel, when the Saviour said to him, 'When thou wast under the fig-tree I saw thee.' The good man seems to have been engaged in devotional exercises, in a small retired garden, walled in, and concealed from the scrutinizing eyes of men. The place was so small, that he was perfectly certain no man but himself was there; so completely defended, that none could break through, or look over the fence; and therefore, as no eye was upon him but the all-seeing eye of God,—and yet Christ saw him there, Nathaniel knew he could be no other than the Son of God, and the promised Messiah.*

The gardens mentioned in the song of Solomon, were stored with a much greater variety of plants; but then it is to be remembered, these belonged to a prince remarkable for his curiosity, for his knowledge of natural history, and for his magnificence. These royal gardens appear to have been at a distance from the palace; while the miniature gardens of the ancient Jews, in common life, were adjoining to their houses.

Water, in the absence of which every plant is burnt up, during the raging heats of an oriental summer, is indispensable in their gardens. All those near Aleppo are on the banks of the river, which refreshes that city and the surrounding fields, or on the sides of the rill which supplies their aqueduct; the rest of the country is converted, by the scorching beams of the summer sun, into an arid waste; the gardens only retaining their verdure, on account of the moisture supplied from the river.† A garden without a refreshing stream, is quickly deprived of its shade, stripped of its vegetation, and converted into a joyless desert. This will enable us to form a clear and vivid idea of

* Gardens were the places which the rabbies chose as the usual scene of their instructions.—*Editor.*

† Russel's History, vol. i. p. 51.

the energy with which the following declaration of Isaiah would fall on the ear of a Jew:—'For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water.'* So necessary is a sufficient supply of water for the cultivation, and even for the preservation and existence of a garden in those regions, that not one is to be found unprovided with a certain supply; either from some neighbouring river, or from a reservoir, collected from springs, or filled with rain water in the proper season, in sufficient quantity to afford an ample store for the rest of the year. The necessity of an abundant supply, is evident from the emphatical manner in which the sacred historian states, concerning the seat of primeval innocence, that 'a river went out of Eden, to water the garden.' The habitation of upright man was formed by the unerring hand of Jehovah himself, and stored with every plant and tree that was pleasant to the sight, and good for food; but the circumstance of its being well supplied with water, seemed necessary to complete the picture of a garden, in the eye of an oriental. This idea is confirmed and illustrated by the management of the gardens which enclose the city of Damascus. The finest object which met the eye of Maundrell, at the palace of the emir of Beiroot (ancient Berytus), and the most deserving of remembrance, was the orange garden. It contained a large quadrangular plot of ground, divided into sixteen smaller squares, four in a row, with walks between them. The walks were shaded with orange trees, of a large spreading size. Every one of these sixteen smaller squares was bordered with stone; and in the stone work were troughs, or conduits, contrived with great art, for conveying the water all over the garden; little outlets being cut at every tree, for the stream as it passed by, to flow out and water it.† The royal gardens at Ispahan, according to Kempfer's description, are watered precisely in the

* Isa. i. 30. † See Maundrell's Journey, p. 39.

same manner.* The same method of irrigation has been followed in the East from time immemorial; for Homer leads the streams of a gelid fountain through the extensive gardens of Alcinous.† [The town of Tayf, writes a recent traveller, is celebrated all over Arabia for its beautiful gardens. They are watered by wells and rivulets, which descend from the mountains. Numerous fruit trees are found in them, grapes of a very large size and exquisite flavour, and abundance of roses. They spread over a space of four or five miles in circuit, and form a most fertile and agreeable spot. All kinds of fruit trees, with the exception of apple and pear, neither of which, I believe, grow in Arabia, are seen in these gardens, which are all enclosed by walls, and watered by numerous wells. Lord Lindsay, describing the garden of Roda, says:—'It is a lovely spot. One walk, with borders of myrtle, particularly charmed me, leading between rows of orange trees in full bearing, to a fountain surrounded by cypress trees. Rosemary edges the walk like box in England, and roses bloom in profusion, and gorgeous butterflies ever flitting about in every direction. Little *canals for irrigation* are conducted *all over* the garden, some of them of hewn stone, others merely dug in the earth, and the water is transferred from one into the other by opening or damming it with the foot, as in Moses' time.'‡]

These statements give us a clear idea of the *Palgay maim*, mentioned in the first Psalm, and other places of Scripture, the divisions of waters; or, the waters distributed in artificial canals. The prophet Jeremiah has imitated and elegantly amplified the figure used by the Psalmist:—'He shall be like a tree planted by the water side, and which sendeth forth her roots to

* Morier's Trav, vol i. p. 163, and vol. ii. p. 162. In Hindostan, according to Forbes, they water their gardens in the same way.—Orient. Mem. vol. i. p. 252.

† Odyssey, lib. vii. l. 130.

‡ Lord Lindsay's Letters from the Holy Land, vol. i. p. 56.

the aqueduct; she shall not fear when the heat cometh; but her leaf shall be green; and in the year of drought she shall not be anxious, neither shall she cease from bearing fruit.'* It gives us also the true meaning of that beautiful proverb,—'The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord, as the small streams, or canals of water: He turneth it whithersoever he will.'† The direction, even of the king's heart, is in the hand of Jehovah, as the distribution of water through the garden by different canals, is at the will of the gardener.‡

Such distant imitations of the garden of Eden were numbered among the pleasures in which Solomon indulged, and which he mentions as works on which he set a particular value:—'I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards; I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits; I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees.'§ The supposed remains of these magnificent undertakings have been described by more travellers than one, who visited and examined them in the course of their wanderings. The reservoirs, which still bear the name of the powerful and splendid monarch by whom they were probably constructed, are three in number, lying in a row above each other, being so disposed, that the waters of the uppermost may descend into the second, and those of the second into the third. Their figure is quadrangular; the breadth is the same in all, amounting to about ninety paces; in their length there is some difference between them; the first being an hundred and sixty paces long; the second, two hundred; the third, two hundred and twenty. They are lined with stone, and plastered, and contain a great depth of water.‖

* Jer. xvii. 8.

† Prov. xxi. 1.

‡ Lowth on Isaiah, vol. ii. pp. 22, 23, 24.

§ Eccles. ii. 4–6.

‖ Maundrell's Journey, pp. 89, 90. These have been so often repaired, that they present now an entirely modern appearance, although still according to the style of oriental gardens. The place

[‘ In a hot climate,’ says Mr Campbell, ‘ where showers seldom fall, the difference between a well watered and an ill watered garden is most striking. I remember some gardens, where they could lead no water upon them ; the plants were all stunted, sickly, or withering away, and others completely gone. The sight was unpleasant, and caused gloom to appear in every countenance : they were pictures of desolation. But in other gardens, to which the owners could bring daily supplies of water from an overflowing fountain, causing it to traverse the garden, every plant had a green, healthy appearance, loaded with fruit, in different stages towards maturity, with fragrant scent, proceeding from beds of lovely flowers.’]

From these facts, it may be seen with what peculiar force and beauty our Lord compares his people, on account of their inherent purity, the work of his own Spirit, and the blessings which they are the means of diffusing wherever they come, ‘ to a fountain of gardens,’* so indispensable to the verdure and fruitfulness of a garden in those parts of the world. Nor is it with less propriety Jehovah promises to his ancient people :—‘ Thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not ;’† lovely, rich, and flourishing in holy dispositions, and in works of righteousness; the delight of God, the glory of Christ, the admiration of angels, the joy of the whole earth. But ‘ the beauty and value of a garden refreshed by shade and water, is perhaps no where more

mentioned by Maundrell, and acquiesced in by our author, has long been the traditionary site of those famous gardens, but seemingly on no good grounds, as these are five miles from Jerusalem, whereas all the passages of Scripture place Solomon’s gardens close to the city.—*Editor.*

* Song, iv. 15. In the 12th verse mention is made of ‘ a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.’ We have in a former part of this volume had occasion to state that fountains, which are much valued on account of their copiousness, are secured from sand and other dangers, by the covering of an immense stone.—*Editor.*

† Isaiah lviii. 11.

highly estimated than by the prophet Jeremiah in his prediction concerning the return of the captives from Babylon:—"Therefore shall they come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all."'* [To these illustrations we may add, that the same prophet, wishing to describe the happy and flourishing condition of the church in the millennial age, could find no image better suited to his purpose, than comparing her to a well-watered garden. 'I the Lord do keep the vineyard; I will water it every moment;' *i. e.* I will protect it by my overruling providence, so that no weapon formed against it shall prosper; and I will refresh it by the influences of my Holy Spirit, so that my sons and daughters shall then bring forth excellent fruit in abundance.]

Though the oriental garden has few pretensions to design or elegance,† still some attention is discovered in the arrangement of the plots, and in their cultivation. At Aleppo, the whole extent of their gardens, which are separated from each other by low stone walls, is subdivided into square or oblong fields, irregularly bordered with dwarf trees, flowering shrubs, and trees of taller growth; among which the plane, the weeping willow, the ash, and the white poplar,

* Jer. xxxi. 12. Forbes's Orient. Mem. vol. ii. p. 241. See also Russel's Hist. of Aleppo, vol. i. pp. 50, 51.

† 'Inelegant as the oriental gardens may appear to the cultivated taste of an Englishman, they afford a voluptuous noontide retreat to the languid traveller. Even he whose imagination can recal the enchanting scenery of Richmond or of Stow, may perhaps experience new pleasure in viewing the glistening pomegranates in full blossom. Revived by the freshening breeze, the purling of the water-brooks, and the verdure of the groves, his ear will catch the melody of the nightingale, delightful beyond what is heard in England: with conscious gratitude to Heaven, he will recline on the simple mat, bless the hospitable shelter, and perhaps, while indulging the pensive mood, he will hardly regret the absence of British regularity and refinement in gardening.'—*Russel's History of Aleppo.—Editor.*

make a conspicuous figure. Within some of these enclosures are cultivated apples,* melons, and cucumbers, together with a variety of esculent roots, greens and legumes, for the kitchen; in others, cotton, tobacco, sesamum, palma Christi, and lucern; and some are sown with barley, to be cut green for the use of the horses in the spring.

Interspersed among the kitchen enclosures, are large plantations of pomegranate, of plum, or of cherry trees; and sometimes groves composed of the various fruit trees which the country produces. All these trees are standards; and though sometimes planted in rows, they are for the most part crowded close together with little regard to symmetry, forming wild and impervious thickets. In other parts of the grounds, a more complete shade is formed by tufts of lofty trees, which, uniting their branches at top, give shelter to roses of different sorts, and to a profusion of wild aromatic herbs, which, thus protected from the sun, long retain their fragrance.† To such a mode of arrangement, the inspired writers more than once allude. Thus, the prophet Ezekiel, in his parable of the two eagles and the vine:—'There was also another great eagle, with great wings, and many feathers; and behold, this vine did bend her roots towards him, and shot forth her

* Apples, such as we have in this country, are seldom met with in Palestine, and those that are raised are of a very small dwarfish description. What are called apples, in our translation, are most probably the fruit of the citron, which is a tall and wide-spreading tree, whose leaves are exceedingly beautiful; and being perennial, as well as having a most exquisite smell, afford so delightful a shade, that every one who has ever enjoyed the gratification, can enter fully into the feelings described in the Song of Solomon:—'I sat under its shade with great delight.' Its fruit, when ripe, is very like an orange; in fact, resembles *the colour of gold*. It is as exquisitely fragrant to the smell, as its juice is refreshing to the palate. As the first fruits were carried to the temple in baskets made in net-work of silver, the reader will easily perceive the beauty and force of the language used by Solomon, when he compares a word fitly spoken to 'apples of gold in pictures, or baskets of silver.'—*Editor.*

† Russel's Hist. of Aleppo.

branches toward him, that he might water it by the furrows of her plantations. It was planted in a good soil, by great waters, that it might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit, that it might be a goodly vine.'*

The extensive gardens in various parts of Syria, described by Russel and other travellers, will enable us to form a tolerably correct idea of the gardens and orchards of Solomon, in whose fragrant and umbrageous retreats, he seems to have so greatly delighted. That magnificent prince appears to have had a range of such enclosures, appropriated to the cultivation of particular fruits; in which he was imitated by the succeeding kings of Israel and Judah. In allusion to this arrangement, our Lord says to the church, 'Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits. . . . . I went down into the garden of nuts, to see the fruits of the valley.'† The prophet Isaiah compares the daughter of Zion to a garden of cucumbers; and Ahab desired to have the vineyard of Naboth for a garden of herbs.‡

[The ancient Hebrews seem to have had four different kinds of gardens :—First, those in which particular kinds of fruit only were cultivated, as we read of the garden of cucumbers, the garden of nuts or almonds, oliveyards and vineyards. Secondly, those in which various kinds of fruit-trees were raised. The Jews, indeed, were, for a moral or symbolical purpose, prohibited from planting olives in vineyards ; but, in other respects, they had no scruple in intermingling fruit-trees of different sorts in the same plot of ground,—an instance of which we find incidentally mentioned in the parable of a certain man who had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and in the history of Solomon, who,

* Ezek. xvii. 7. † Song, iv. 13 ; and vi. 11.

‡ 1 Kings xxi. 1. The word rendered nuts in our version, is rendered almonds in the Greek translation of the Septuagint ; and the probability is, that the fruit raised in this garden was almonds.—*Editor.*

describing his diversified pursuit of enjoyment, says, 'I made me orchards and vineyards, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits.' In the list of these fruit-trees, the fig, date, citron or apple, almond and pomegranate, held the highest place, and were the greatest favourites in the ancient gardens of Palestine. Thirdly, there were the kitchen-gardens, in which were grown those esculent plants and vegetables, which were suited to the climate and the habits of the people. Some of these were valued, in domestic economy, for their refreshing coolness, as gourds, melons, and cucumbers; while others again were reared for the table, as condiments and tonics, as onions, leeks, garlic, anise, rice, cummin, cinnamon, coriander, mustard, and cassia. A fourth description of garden, which was in high repute among all classes of the Hebrews, as indeed it has been of orientals in every age, was the flower-garden. Garlands of roses were in request for every banquet; wearing apparel was profusely sprinkled with perfumes; and the most welcome rite of hospitality with which one friend could receive another, was to pour over his head the essence of some sweet-scented and odoriferous plant. No wonder, then, that flowers of balmy fragrance were cultivated with the greatest care by the wealthier Hebrews, and that we find in the Song of Solomon a catalogue of oriental flowers, distinguished not more by their variety, than their exquisite odours.

[The fruit and flower gardens of Palestine, as in many other eastern countries, are manured with doves dung, which is considered the best adapted for imparting richness and size to the produce. It is used, especially in the rearing of melons; and hence, as melons are in great request for their refreshing juice, the immense number of pigeon-houses to be seen in the East. The extraordinary flights of those species of bird which I have seen alight upon one of those buildings, says Mr Morier, afford, perhaps, a good illustration of the pas-

sage in Isaiah :—'Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?' Their great numbers, and the compactness of their mass, literally look like a cloud at a distance, and obscure the sun in their passage.* The dung of pigeons is the dearest the Persians use; and its great value, in rearing a fruit indispensable to the existence of the natives during the great heats of summer, will probably throw light upon that portion of sacred history, when, in the famine of Samaria, the fourth part of a cab of doves dung was sold for five pieces of silver.†]

But the people of Israel, and other oriental nations of those days, appear to have bestowed particular attention on the cultivation of the vine. The site of the vineyard was carefully chosen in fields of a loose crumbling soil, on a rich plain, or on a sloping hill rising with a gentle ascent; or, where the acclivity was very steep, on terraces supported by masonry, and turned as much as possible from the setting sun. The plot was enclosed with a wall; the stones and other encumbrances were removed, and the choicest plants were selected to form the plantation.‡ Within the vineyard, low walls were sometimes raised for the purpose of supporting the vines; a practice which seems to have been adopted before the days of Jacob, for in the blessing of Joseph, he speaks of it in a manner which shows that it was quite familiar to the vine-dresser :—'Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall.'§ The Persian vine-dressers do all in their power to make the vine run up the wall and curl over on the other side, which they do by tying stones to the extremity of the tendrils. In some

* This is literally descriptive of many places in Egypt, where the birds are carefully reared to supply dressing for the land. The pigeon houses are lofty, very conical, and built of mud, in great numbers together, and pierced with an incredible number of holes or windows.—*Editor.*

† 2 Kings vi. 25. Second Journey, p. 140.

‡ Varro de Re Rustica, lib. i. cap. 26. Columella de Re Rustica, lib. iv. cap. 3, &c.

§ Genesis xlix. 22.

other countries, the vine is frequently made to entwine on trellisses, round a well, where, in the heat of the day, whole families collect and sit in the shade. By this beautiful image, then, it appears, that while the dying patriarch justly appreciated and highly praised the admirable qualities of his beloved son, he intimated to his family, in the most delicate but significant manner, their obligation to Joseph for the protection and comfort they enjoyed under his government.* [The same beautiful image is employed by the Psalmist, when describing the felicity which the marriage relation adds to a pious man, to show what a solace and ornament a faithful wife is :—' Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thy house.' It is very common to cover the stair leading to the upper apartments of the harem with the vines, and they have often a lattice work of wood raised against the dead *walls*, for a vine to creep upon.† But by far the most beautiful form which this climbing plant assumes is when it entwines its slender and pliant tendrils around the stem and the branches of some strong and stately tree. The vines in oriental countries boast of a luxuriant growth unknown in our colder climates; and trained by the hand of man, they are seen clinging with their arms round the under parts of tall and erect trees, till in their upward progress they climb to the topmost bough of the loftiest oaks, beeches, and elms. ' Nothing,' says a late writer, ' is more pleasing than to witness the growth of the vine, which is generally found in great abundance on the declivities of the mountains. There it twines over the tallest trees, farther than the eye can reach, and its branches, which are as thick as an arm, are so spread and entangled together, that in those places where it is most luxuriant, it is difficult to penetrate.' Let the reader mark how strikingly this account of the traveller corresponds with the

* Morier's Second Journey, p. 232.
† Russel's History of Aleppo.

highly poetical description, founded also on natural scenery familiar to his mind, which the Psalmist gives of ancient Israel under the emblem of a vine, transplanted by the Lord of the vineyard from Egypt to the more genial soil of Palestine. Like the vines described by the writer just quoted, whose luxuriant and thickly spreading branches it was difficult to penetrate, this allegorical vine 'took deep root and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars,' or cedars of God. The boughs thereof, which our translators, by supplement, have rendered, 'were like' the cedars of God, Bishop Lowth, more attentive to the natural history and habits of the vine, has rendered 'covered' the cedars of God, *i. e.*, entwined themselves so closely as to envelope with their green leaves and their pendant clusters, even the lofty cedars to the summit;—an image most expressive of the happy and flourishing state to which, under the fostering care of its covenant God, Israel had been raised after its settlement in Canaan, and particularly in the auspicious reign of David. It remains only to add, that the owners of vineyards frequently select for their own use some vigorous and promising vine, which they manure, and prune, and dress with the greatest care, thus making it strong for themselves;—a practice to which the Psalmist has likewise given a place in his graphic description:—'Return we beseech thee, O God of hosts, look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself.'*

[The vineyards being unenclosed, and in the open fields, with no security against injury or depredation, except the faithfulness and energy of the solitary watchman who is stationed in the tower, that commonly forms the central object of such plantations, are peculiarly exposed to the inroads of all sorts of vermin, and not

* Psalm lxxx.

the least destructive among the four-footed robbers in eastern countries has ever been the wild boar. 'A friend of mine,' says Hartley, 'was passing, in the dusk of the evening, through a vineyard, when he observed an animal of a large size rushing from amongst the vines, crossing the road, and taking to flight with great precipitation. His Greek companion, who was riding first, exclaimed, wild boar! wild boar! and really it proved a wild boar, who was retreating from the vineyards to the woods. "What has the wild boar to do in the vineyards?" inquired my friend. Oh, said his guide, 'tis the custom of the wild boars to frequent the vineyards and to devour the grapes. And it is astonishing what havoc a wild boar is capable of making, what with eating, and what with trampling under foot, he will destroy an immense quantity of grapes.' What a striking illustration does this incident afford of that beautiful passage in the Psalms:—'The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.*

[The wild boar and beasts of prey were not the only enemies that laid waste a vineyard. Careless shepherds allowed, malicious and unprincipled shepherds drove, their flocks so as to tread down a vineyard; in allusion to which, Jeremiah describes the desolation of Judea by the captains of Nebuchadnezzar's army, under the character of such shepherds. 'Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.'† The elements, too, in the violent and furious impetuosity that characterizes their angry moods in Palestine, often convert a beautiful and well-arranged vineyard, which it may have taken years to bring into order and productiveness, in one single night into a heap of rubbish. Those plantations being generally on the sides of hills, from which the small stones are gathered, and built into walls to preserve

* Psalm lxxx. 13. † Jer. xii. 10.

the light soil, which, with infinite pains, is carried up to them, from being washed away,—a storm may overturn the fence of loose stones, throw them into a mass together, and sweep the light earth entirely away, leaving nothing but the naked rock on which the vineyard is planted. In beautiful allusion to the desolating effects which a tempest sometimes produces on the vineyards of the East, the prophet Micah describes the subversion of Samaria :—'I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard ; and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof.'*]

The wine-press constructed for expressing the juice of the grapes, does not seem to be a moveable implement in the East ; and our Lord, in the parable of the vineyard, says expressly, that it was formed by digging. Chardin found the wine-press in Persia was made after the same manner ; it was a hollow place dug in the ground, and lined with mason work. Besides this, they had what the Romans called *lacus*, the lake, a large open place or vessel, which, by a conduit or spout, received the *must* from the wine-press. In very hot countries it was perhaps necessary, or at least convenient, to have the lake under ground, or in a cave hewed out of the rock for coolness, that the heat might not cause too great a fermentation, and sour the *must*.†

To these circumstances, the prophet Isaiah distinctly refers in the beginning of the fifth chapter :—'My well beloved has a vineyard in a very fruitful hill : and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof ; and planted it with the choicest vine ; and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein ; and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.' The tower which the prophet mentions, and which our Lord also introduces in-

* Micah i. 6.

† Lowth on Isaiah, vol. ii. p. 61. Hartley informs us, that such wine-presses, dug in the ground, are still to be met with in the vineyards.—*Researches*, p. 360.—*Editor*.

to one of his parables, is generally explained by commentators, as designed for the keepers of the vineyard to watch and defend the fruits. But for this purpose, it was usual to make a little temporary hut, called in the first chapter not a tower but a cottage, which might serve for the short season while the grapes were ripening, and was afterwards removed. The tower, therefore, according to Lowth, means a building of a more permanent nature and use ; the farm of the vineyard, as we may call it, containing all the offices and implements, and the whole apparatus necessary for cultivating the vineyard and making the wine. To this image in the allegory, the situation, the manner of building, the use, and the whole service of the temple exactly answered.* They have still such towers for pleasure or use in their gardens in the oriental regions ; for Marcus Sanutus, as quoted by Harmer, informs us, that, in the thirteenth century, the inhabitants of Ptolemais beat down the towers of their gardens to the ground, and removed the stones of them, together with those of their burying places, on the approach of the Tartars. The gardens of Damascus are furnished with the same kind of edifices.† In most of the gardens near Aleppo, summer houses are built for the reception of the public. In others, at a greater distance, are tolerably commodious villas, to which the Franks resort in the spring, as the natives do in the summer.‡ 'To a tower, or building of this kind, it is to be supposed,' says Russel, 'our Lord refers in the parable ; for it is scarcely to be imagined that he is speaking of the slight and unexpensive buildings in a vineyard ; which, indeed, are sometimes so slight as to consist only of four poles, with a floor on the top of them, to which they ascend by a ladder : but rather of those elegant turrets erected in gardens, where the

* Lowth on Isaiah, vol. ii. p. 60.
† Maundrell's Journey, p. 122.
‡ Russel's History of Aleppo, vol. i. p. 50.

eastern people of fortune spend some considerable part of their time.'* But this excellent writer expressly admits that in all the orchards near Aleppo, a small square watch-house is built for the accommodation of the watchmen in the fruit season, or, in their stead, temporary bowers are constructed of wood, and thatched with green reeds and branches. Small and detached square towers for the accommodation of the watchmen appointed to guard the vineyards, are still to be met with in Judea.† It is more probably to the substantial watch-tower that the Saviour alludes, than either to the offices of the vineyard, or the commodious summer-house.

The vineyard has been, in all ages, and in every part of the world adapted to the culture of the vine, a scene of joy and singing. While employed in checking the loose straggling boughs, clearing away the superfluous leaves, and laying open the swelling grapes to the sun, the vine-dresser beguiles his labours with a song.‡ Not less delighted with the pleasing labours of the vineyard, the Syrian vine-dresser gave vent also to his joyous feelings in the same way; for, in describing the desolations of Moab, the prophet Isaiah foretold, that 'the song shall cease from the vineyard; gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyard there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting. The treaders shall tread out no wine in their presses: I have made their vintage shouting to cease.'§ [The burden of these songs of the vintagers

* No doubt they were the same as the modern Turkish Kiosks.—*Editor.*

† Buckingham's Travels, vol. i. p. 335.

‡ 'Hinc alta sub rupe canet frondator ad auras.'—*Vir.* Ecl. 1. And when the labours of the year are finished, when the vines are tied, and the vineyard lays aside the pruning-hook, now, says the same bard, the exhausted vintager salutes in song his utmost rows:

'Jam vinctæ vites; jam falcem arbusta reponunt;
Jam canit extremos effœtus vinitor antes.'—*Geor.* ii. l. 417.

The vintage was also a time of high festivity in Greece. Hesiod Scutum Herculis, l. 292-301.

§ Isa. xvi. 10; also Jeremiah xlviii. 32, 33.

is commonly the flourishing condition and luxuriant crops of the vineyard itself, hence the same prophet commences his fifth chapter thus :—'Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my well-beloved *touching his vineyard*.' And also in the xxvii. chapter, 2d verse, he makes a similar allusion to this practice of cheering their labours with a song :—'In that day sing ye unto her, a vineyard of red (*i. e.* the most valuable) wine.' Lively as was the song of the vine-dressers, during an ordinary or a very promising season, their strains were correspondingly dull, lifeless, and elegiac on the failure of their hopes; and, accordingly, Joel graphically describes the famine occasioned by the swarms of locusts in the following terms :—'The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth. Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen; *howl*, O ye vine-dressers, for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished: the vine is dried up, and the fig-tree languisheth; the pomegranate-tree, the palm-tree also, and the apple-tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because *joy* is withered away from the sons of men.']

Ripe grapes begin to appear in the market of Aleppo in September, but the height of the vintage is not till November,* and it seems to happen about the same time in Palestine. But if the fruit of the vine come to maturity at Aleppo and Jerusalem nearly about the same time, it must have been the latter end of July, or rather the beginning of August, that the spies were sent by Moses to search out the promised land. He says they received their instructions at the time of the first ripe grapes, and after forty days, they returned and brought with them a large bunch of grapes, pomegranates, and figs; which proves that these fruits ripen at the same time. This agrees with Dr Shaw's account, that grapes begin to ripen in Barbary the latter end

* Russel's Hist. of Aleppo, vol. i. p. 80.

of July, and are ready for the vintage in September; the kermez or fig, properly so called, which they preserve and make up into cakes, is rarely ripe before August, the month which produces the ripe pomegranates.* The spies, then, received their instructions about the beginning of August, and returned in the middle of September; and their observations concerning the fatness of the land, must have related to the figs, grapes, and other fruits of the country, rather than to the corn which had been long before gathered in, and lay concealed in their secret repositories.†

The juice of the grape, it is well known, is expressed in the East by treading, an operation which Dr Chandler had an opportunity of seeing near Smyrna.‡ Black grapes were spread on the ground in beds, and exposed to the sun to dry for raisins; while in another part, the juice was expressed for wine, a man with feet and legs bare, treading the fruit in a kind of cistern, with a hole or vent near the bottom, and a vessel beneath it to receive the liquor. When a few clusters of grapes are to be squeezed, it may be done commodiously enough by the hand; in this way Pharaoh's butler supposed he took the grapes and pressed them into his master's cup. This, it is true, was only a visionary scene, but we must suppose it was agreeable to the custom of the country. But when a large quantity of juice was required, the grapes were subjected in the wine-press to the feet of a treader.§ Oil of olives was expressed in the same way, before the invention of mills. The existence of this practice in Palestine is ascertained by that threatening in the prophecies of Micah:—'Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap; thou shalt tread the olives, but shalt not anoint thee with oil; and sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine.'‖ But unequivocal traces of it may be discovered in ages long anterior to

* Shaw's Travels. vol. i. p. 267.
† Harmer's Observ. vol. i. pp. 139, 146.
‡ Trav. in Greece, p. 2.
§ Varro de Re Rust. lib. i. cap. 54.
‖ Micah, vi. 15.

the days of that prophet ; for in the blessing of Asher, we find Moses praying :—'Let Asher dip his foot in oil.'* Whether any preparation was used in those ancient times to facilitate the expression of the juice, we are not informed ; but it is certain that mills are now used for pressing and grinding the olives which grow in the neighbourhood of Athens, and probably in other eastern countries. These mills are in the town, and not in the spot where the olives grow ; and seem to be used in consequence of its being found that the mere weight of the human body is insufficient for the purpose of effectually extracting the oil.†

The treading of grapes and olives is a custom to which frequent reference is made by the inspired writers. The glorious Redeemer of the church appeared in vision to the prophet in the garb and mein of a mighty conqueror returning in triumph from the field of battle, and drew from him this admiring interrogation :—'Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?' To which the Saviour answers :—'I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.' The prophet resumes:—'Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine fat?' And Jehovah Jesus replies:—'I have trodden the wine-press alone ; and of the people there was none with me ; for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury ; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.'‡ As the raiment of the treader was sprinkled with the blood of the grapes, so were the garments of the Redeemer with the blood of his enemies, who were as effectually and easily crushed by his almighty power, as are the clusters of the vine when fully ripe, beneath the feet of the treader. The same figure is employed in the book of

* Deut. xxxiii. 24. † Harmer's Observ. vol. i. p. 439.
‡ Isa. lxiii. 1, &c.

Revelation, to express the decisive and fearful destruction, which awaits the man of sin and his coadjutors, that refuse to turn from the error of their way :—'And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God. And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horses' bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.'* The new wines, in some places, are always poured into casks that have been kept for ages, and after remaining on the old lees of former years, are drawn off for use, which adds greatly to the quality of the wine. To this practice the words of the prophet evidently refer :—'And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.'†

The vintager cuts down the grapes from the vine with a sharp hook or sickle; for the command to the destroying angel in the Revelation is :—'Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.'‡ But the olive was sometimes beaten off the tree, and sometimes shaken. The former method is mentioned by Moses in one of his precepts :—'When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.'§ The latter is marked by the prophet Isaiah : —'Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree; two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the Lord God of Israel.'‖

* Rev. xiv. 18.
† De Tott's Mem. vol. ii. p. 359. Isa. xxv. 6.
‡ Columella de Re Rust. lib. iv. cap. 24, 25.
§ Deut. xxiv. 20. ‖ Isa. xvii. 6.

It occurs again in a denunciation of divine judgments by the same prophet :—' When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done.'* The conjecture of Harmer on these quotations, in which the shaking of the olive tree is connected with the gleaning of grapes, is not improbable, ' that the shaking of the olive tree does not indicate an improvement made in after times on the original mode of gathering them; or different methods of procedure by different people in the same age and country, who possessed olive yards; but rather expressed the difference between the gathering of the main crop by the owners, and the way in which the poor collected the few olive berries that were left, and which, by the law of Moses, they were permitted to take.' †

The custom of beating the olive with long poles to make the fruit fall, is still followed in some parts of Italy. This foolish method, besides hurting the plant, and spoiling many branches that would bear the year following, makes the ripe and unripe fruit fall indiscriminately, and bruises a great deal of both kinds, by which they become rancid in the heaps, and give an ill-flavoured oil.‡ Such is the statement of the abbot Fortis, in his account of Dalmatia;§ we are not then to wonder, that in the time of Moses, when the art of cultivation was in so simple and unimproved a state, beating should have been the common way of gathering olives by the owners, who were disposed to leave, we may suppose, as few as possible, and were forbidden by their law to go over the branches a second time. But shaking them appears to have been sufficient, when they had hung till they were fully ripe; and was therefore practised by the poor, or by stran-

* Ch. xxiv. 13.

† Harmer's Observ. vol. iii. pp. 271, 272. The Jews were prohibited from gathering the fruit of the vine, or of any tree, until the fifth year after it began to bear. Lev. xix. 23-25.

‡ Varro de Re Rust. lib. i. cap. 55. § P. 412.

gers, who were either not provided with such long poles as the owners possessed, or did not find them necessary. Indeed, it is not improbable, that the owners were well aware of the injury done to the olive trees by beating, although they practised it, because it was the most effectual way of gathering the fruit with which they were acquainted; and might, therefore, prohibit the poor and the stranger from collecting the gleanings in that manner: they were on that account, reduced to the necessity of shaking the olive berries from the tree, however ineffectual might be the method, or of remaining without them. The main crop, then, seems to have been taken from the olive by beating, and the gleanings uniformly by shaking. Under this conviction, Dr Lowth has, with great judgment, translated the sixth verse of the seventeenth chapter of Isaiah:—A gleaning shall be left in it, as in the shaking of the olive tree.*

In peaceful times, the press in which the grapes and olives were trodden, was constructed in the vineyard:

* See Harmer's Observations, vol. iii. p. 273. The oil was of great use to the Jews, answering the purpose of butter with us. It was also used to supply light in the lamps. For this latter purpose the berries were often plucked before they were ripe, and squeezed in the hand. This was considered the best oil, and it was with oil thus obtained, that the altar of the sanctuary was always furnished. Exod. xxvii. 20.—'I had my attention,' says Mr Hartley, 'directed to the practice of grafting the olive trees, to which allusion is made in Scripture:—"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit," John xv. 2; "and if some of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild olive tree, wert graffed in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree. If thou wert cut out of the olive tree, which is wild by nature, and wert graffed contrary to nature into a good olive tree," Rom xi. 17, 24. My friend showed me a few wild olives, but by far the greater number are such as have been graffed. He informs me, that it is the universal practice in the Morea to graft from a good tree upon the wild olive. I also noticed the manner in which the vine is cut or *purged*. Only two or three of the principal sprouts are permitted to grow up from the root, the rest are cut, and this practice is often called purging or cleaning.'—*Researches in the Levant*, p. 314.—*Editor*.

but in time of war and danger, it was removed into the nearest city.* This precaution the restored captives were reduced to the necessity of taking for their safety, at the time they were visited by Nehemiah. In a state of great weakness themselves, without an efficient government or means of defence, they were exposed to the hostile machinations of numerous and powerful enemies. For this reason, many of the Jews brought their grapes from the vineyards, and trod them in Jerusalem,—the only place of safety which the desolated country afforded. 'In those days,' said Nehemiah, 'saw I in Judah, some treading wine-presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves and lading asses; and also wine grapes and figs, and all manner of burthens which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day.'† Had these wine-presses been at a distance from Jerusalem, Nehemiah, who so strictly observed the precept of resting on that day, would not have seen the violation of which he complains.

Our translators, in Mr Harmer's opinion, seem to have been guilty of an oversight in the interpretation of this verse, which plainly supposes, that sheaves of corn were brought into Jerusalem at the very time men were treading the wine-presses. This, he observes, is a strange anachronism, since the harvest there was finished in or before the third month, and the vintage was not till the seventh.

But it may be replied, in favour of our translators, that, by Mr Harmer's own admission, they have at present a species of corn in the East, which is not ripe till the end of summer; which made Rauwolf say, it was the time of harvest when he arrived at Joppa, on the 13th of September. But if they have such a species of corn now, it is more than probable they had it then; for the customs and management of the orientals suffer almost no alteration from the lapse of time, and change of circumstances. If this be admitted, the difficulty

* Chandler's Trav. p. 126. † Neh. xiii. 15.

vanishes; and there is nothing incongruous or absurd in supposing that Nehemiah might see his countrymen bringing this late grain in sheaves from the field, to tread it out in the city, for fear of their numerous and malicious foes, who might have set upon them, had they not taken this precaution, as the Arabs frequently do on the present inhabitants, and seized the heaps on the barn floor. Mr Harmer translates the Hebrew term, parcels of grapes; but as the word signifies a heap of any thing, it may with equal propriety be rendered parcels or sheaves of corn, especially as grapes are mentioned afterwards. It is true, our author makes them dried grapes; but for the word *dried*, he has no authority from the original text: there is no good reason, therefore, to find fault with our translators in this instance.

In the gardens around Aleppo, commodious villas are built for the use of the inhabitants, to which they retire during the oppressive heats of summer.* Here, amid the wild and almost impervious thickets of pomegranate, and other fruit-bearing trees, the languid native, and exhausted traveller, find a delightful retreat from the scorching beams of the sun. A similar custom of retiring into the country, and taking shelter in the gardens at that season, appears to have been followed in Palestine in ages very remote; for in the Song of Solomon, this invitation from the church to her Redeemer occurs:—'Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages; let us go up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth; there will I give thee my loves.'† In another passage she says to her companions:—'My beloved has gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies;'‡ and in another, she addresses her beloved in these ap-

* Russel's History of Aleppo, vol. i. p. 50.
† Song vii. 11, 12. ‡ Song vi. 2.

propriate terms :—'Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice.' *

The exquisite pleasure which an oriental feels, while he reclines under the deep shade of the pomegranate, the apple, and other fruitful trees in the Syrian gardens, which, uniting their branches over his head, defend him from the glowing firmament, is well described by Russel. 'Revived by the freshening breeze, the purling of the brooks, and the verdure of the groves, his ear will catch the melody of the nightingale, delightful, beyond what is heard in England; with conscious gratitude to heaven, he will recline on the simple mat, and bless the hospitable shelter. Beyond the limits of the gardens hardly a vestige of verdure remains; the fields are turned into a parched and naked waste.' One almost feels the scorching beam, and sickens under irresistible force, in perusing the description of nature's bard :—

> 'Tis raging noon, and vertical the sun
> Darts on the head direct his forceful rays.
> O'er heaven and earth, far as the ranging eye
> Can sweep, a dazzling deluge reigns, and all
> From pole to pole is undistinguished blaze.
> In vain the sight dejected, to the ground
> Stoops for relief; thence hot ascending steams
> And keen reflection pain.' †

But attend the oriental to the refreshing shade of his garden, and then

> 'Cool through the nerves his pleasing comfort glides;
> The heart beats glad; the fresh expanded eye
> And ear resume their watch; the sinews knit;
> And life shoots swift through all the lighten'd limbs.'

Not only the actual enjoyment of shade and water diffuses the sweetest pleasure through the panting

* Song viii. 13.

† In Persia, Mr Martyn found the heat of the external air quite intolerable. In spite of every precaution, the moisture of the body being soon quite exhausted, he grew restless, and thought he should have lost his senses, and concluded, that, though he might hold out a day or two, death was inevitable.—*Memoir of the Life of the Rev. Henry Martyn*, p. 357.

bosom of an oriental, but what is almost inconceivable to the native of a northern clime, even the very idea, the simple recurrence of these gratifications to the mind, conveys a lively satisfaction, and a renovating energy to his heart, when ready to fail him in the midst of the burning desert. 'He who smiles at the pleasure we received,' says Lichtenstein, 'from only being reminded of shade, or thinks this observation trivial, must feel the force of an African sun, to have an idea of the value of shade and water.'*

These descriptions will enable us to form a more correct notion of the inexpressible delight which the longing Christian feels, when he is admitted to fellowship 'with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.' The very conception of such fellowship revives his fainting soul; the sure expectation kindles a holy ardour in his bosom; and the actual possession fills his heart with 'joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' 'I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste; stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love.'† It is therefore no small favour to provide a shelter from the destructive heats of an eastern sky:—'And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.'‡ 'They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor the sun smite them.'§ But who can conceive the joy and the peace which the true believer experiences under the protection of divine power and goodness? 'They shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.'‖

Parties of pleasure frequently repair to the Syrian gardens, in the spring and summer, to regale themselves with the fruits, or to gather flowers; a custom to

* Travels in Africa, p. 104. † Song ii. 35.
‡ Isa. iv. 6. § Isa. xlix. 10. ‖ Isa. xxxv. 10.

which the royal preacher alludes in several parts of the Song. Thus the spouse, after inviting the refreshing breezes to awake, and blow upon her garden, that the spices, which adorned and enriched it, might exhale their fragrance, addresses her Lord :—'Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits ;' let him regard with complacency, the delightful effects of his grace, produced in the hearts, or displayed in the lives, of his people. And to her invitation, he replies, —'I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse : I have gathered my myrrh with my spice ; I have eaten my honey-comb with my honey ; I have drunk my wine with my milk ; eat, O friends ; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.'* In allusion to the same custom, she presents, in the seventh chapter, another supplication :—'Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field ; let us lodge in the villages ; let us get up early to the vineyards ; let us see if the vine flourish ; whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth ; these will I give thee, my loves.' Like those that, weary of the bustle and noise of the crowded city, and exhausted with the increasing heats of the rising year, long for the tranquil pleasures of the garden, or the fruitful field, the reviving coolness of the shade, and the murmur of the streaming rill,— the heaven-born soul desires to leave for a while, the cares and hurry of this world, to enjoy, in secret retirement, or with fellow-believers, the presence and smiles of his Lord ; to mark the growth of divine grace in his heart ; and whether the fruits of righteousness are advancing to maturity ; whether new dispositions of holiness are beginning to appear, and new resolutions to expand, which require the skill and care of the Great Husbandman, to defend and cherish. And while he requests the presence of his Redeemer, in the ordinances of his grace, he promises him the best affections of his heart, the renewed professions of his love,

* Song iv. 16 ; and v. 1.

the ardent breathings of holy desire, kindled and sustained by the smiles of his favour; he engages to entertain him with a display of all the fruits of the Spirit, which are valuable and lovely, and numerous as the products of the varied year, devoted to his service, reserved for his honour, and exhibited for his glory.

CHAPTER III.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE, FROM THE HOUSES, CITIES, WALLS, AND TOWERS OF THE EAST.

THE aboriginal inhabitants of Oriental regions, especially Palestine, appear to have taken up their abode in caves, in dens, and in holes of the rocks,—the excavations of nature or art, of which many remain to the present times, and afford occasional shelter to the wandering shepherd and his flocks, and, in the times of danger, to the trembling fugitive and his family.* But, as their flocks and herds multiplied, the Syrian shepherds were compelled to go in quest of distant pastures, from whence they found it impossible to return at night to their immoveable retreats. Necessity, the mother of the arts, taught them to construct the tent, which they might carry along with them in their wanderings, and set up and take down at their pleasure. But, as the number of the people daily increased, and the necessity of applying themselves to the cultivation of the soil became obvious, they found the tent an unsuitable habitation, and their fields often lay at a considerable distance from the cavern; while the division of property, which was introduced at a very early period,

* Odyssey, lib. ix. l. 113, 114, 400. Josephus Antiquities, book xiv. chap. 15, sec. 4. Buckingham's Travels in Palestine, vol. i. pp. 176, 191.—The whole of the caves on the coast of Palestine, which are very numerous, and many of them well designed and executed, this traveller thinks were the habitations of the ancient Canaanites, some of their strongholds near the sea, from which the children of Israel could not dislodge them.—Pp. 192, 224, 288. Many of the grottoes around Jerusalem he views in the same light.—P. 289.

and the natural desire in every family to dwell apart, suggested the idea of houses, constructed of more durable materials than the tent,—which admitted of being placed sufficiently near for mutual assistance, and, at the same time, furnished the comfort which they so much desired, of living by themselves, and securing their own interests.

In the opinion of Pliny, the oriental barbarian borrowed the idea of building a house for himself and his family, from the swallow; and, in imitation of his feathered instructor, made his first essay in mud.* The Kabyles, on the coast of Barbary, raise their dwellings with hurdles, daubed over with mud, with square cakes of clay baked in the sun, or stones from some adjacent ruin. The roofs are covered with straw or turf, supported by reeds or branches of trees. The largest of them has rarely more than one chamber, which serves for a kitchen, dining-room, and bed-chamber; besides one corner of it, which is reserved for their foals, calves, and kids. As these hovels are always fixed and immoveable, they are undoubtedly what the ancients called magalia; and, therefore, Carthage itself, before the time of Dido, was nothing more than a cluster of mud-built hovels :†—

'Miratur molem Æneas, magalia quondam.'—*Æn.* lib. i. l. 425.

The houses of the lower orders in Egypt are, in like manner, constructed of unburnt bricks, or square pieces of clay, baked in the sun, and only one story high; but those of the higher classes, of stone, and generally two, and sometimes three stories high. These facts are at once a short and lively comment on the words of the

* Natural History, lib. x. cap. 34.

† Dr Shaw's Travels, vol. i. p. 400. The houses of the lower classes in Persia are built of the same materials.—Malcolm's History, vol. ii. p. 525. The houses of Bassorah are built partly of sun-dried and partly of burnt bricks.—Kinneir's Geographical Memoir of the Persian Empire, p. 289. The villages of modern Egypt still consist of mud and straw-built huts, with white pigeon-houses on the top. —Richardson's Travels, vol. ii. p. 141.

prophet:—'All the people shall know, even Ephraim, and the inhabitants of Samaria, that say, in the pride and stoutness of heart, The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stone; the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars.'* Bricks dried in the sun, are poor materials for building,† compared with hewn stone, which in Egypt is almost equal to marble, and forms a strong contrast between the splendid palace and mud-walled cabin. And if, as is probable, the houses of the higher orders in Israel were built with the same species of costly and beautiful stones, the contrast, stated by the prophet, places the vaunting of his wealthier countrymen in a very strong light. The boastful extravagance of that people is still further displayed by the next figure:—'The sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars;' the forests of sycamore, the wood of which we have been accustomed to employ in building, are cut down by the enemy, but instead of them we will import cedars, of whose fragrant and beautiful wood we will construct and adorn our habitations. The sycamore grew in abundance in the low country of Judea, and was not much esteemed; but the cedar was highly

* Isaiah ix. 9, 10.—Richardson informs us that 'the brick pyramid in Egypt is much fallen down on the north side, and looks as if the roof of one chamber had given way, and the walls fallen in: the bricks are sun-dried and remarkably fresh; they have been made of mud and cut straw, in the same manner that bricks are made in Egypt in the present day'—(Travels, vol. ii. p. 146); and, it may be added, in the days of that Pharaoh who made the lives of enslaved and proscribed Israel 'bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field.'—Exodus i. 11-14. The ruins of On, or Heliopolis, consist chiefly of houses of unburnt brick, of the same description with the ruins in Upper Egypt. Such, it is most probable, were the treasure cities which the people of Israel built for Pharaoh.—P. 164.

† The houses of the common people generally throughout the East, and particularly in the mountainous and thinly peopled parts of Palestine and Arabia, are of three kinds,—1. A framework of branches, covered over with clay. 2. Those of which the walls are made entirely of clay or mud, very thick and broad; and, 3. Those of which the walls are composed of mud-bricks dried in the sun, or slightly burnt in a fire of straw and bushes.—*Editor.*

valued; it was brought at a great expense, and with much labour, from the distant and rugged summits of Lebanon, to beautify the dwellings of the great, the palaces of kings, and the temple of Jehovah. It was, therefore, an extravagant boast, betraying the pride and vanity of their depraved hearts, which all the warnings, threatenings, and judgments of the living God, were insufficient to subdue or restrain.

In Judea and some of the neighbouring countries, where rain often falls in winter in very copious and violent showers, instead of earth and straw, they make use of wood in constructing the walls of their dwellings. In this manner was the wall originally built which enclosed the court of the temple at Jerusalem; and it was re-constructed of the same materials, wood and stone, when the Jews returned from their long and painful captivity, by the direction of the Persian monarch. It is evident that the walls of their fortified cities were partly constructed of combustible materials; for the prophet, denouncing the judgments of God upon Syria and other countries, declares:—'I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza, which shall devour the palaces thereof.'* The walls of Tyre and Rabbah seem to have been of the same perishable materials; for the prophet adds:—'I will send a fire on the wall of Tyrus, which shall devour the palaces thereof;' and again, 'I will kindle a fire in the walls of Rabbah, and it shall devour the palaces thereof, with shouting in the day of battle.'† The more durable materials of wood and stone, were preferred by the inhabitants of Canaan from the earliest times; for Moses, in the law concerning the leprous house, proceeds on the assumption that their houses were built of these:—'Then the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which the plague is.'‡ The greater durableness and beauty of such edifices have not, however, prevailed on the lower orders in the East to abandon their mud-walled habitations,

* Amos i. 7. † Verses 10, 1 ‡ Lev. xiv. 40.

even in those places where stone may be procured in abundance. At Damascus, for example, they continue to build with mud and slime, though they have plenty of stones near the city.* In the time of Job, and probably for a long succession of ages, the houses of all ranks in the land of Uz were built of mud; for he charges the adulterer with digging through the walls of his neighbour's house, with the view of gratifying his vile propensities:—'In the dark,' said the sorrowful and indignant patriarch, 'they dig through houses which they had marked for themselves in the day time: they know not the light.'† These walls of dried clay, when moistened with copious showers, must have been liable to accidents of this kind; and as the walls of eastern houses are made very thick, in order to shelter the inhabitants more effectually from the oppressive heats, the term digging, as applied to them, is peculiarly expressive.‡

[The attempt feloniously to enter houses by perforating the walls, is not confined to the licentious characters alluded to in this passage of Job. It is the common way in which thieves and robbers commit their depredations on such houses as they have marked for their prey. Windows and doors not being easily accessible, midnight plunderers never think of wasting their energies in fruitless endeavours to break into a house, but as the soft and fragile walls of clay admit, with a little labour and perseverance, of a hole being dug in them large enough to introduce the human body, all their ingenuity and efforts are directed towards effecting a silent entrance through these, and thus often, when the inmates awake in the morning, the first intimation they receive of the burglary that has been perpetrated on their house is by a stream of light pouring in through the broken wall. Hence it was in allusion to such practices that our Lord, when

* Maundrell's Journey, p. 124.
† Job. xxiv. 16.
‡ Egmont and Hayman, vol. i. p. 300.

discouraging an inordinate pursuit of earthly things, pointed out the brief and uncertain tenure by which the most opulent possessors held their treasures, in the following language, to which the experience or knowledge of his hearers must have given a propriety and force that we cannot feel :—'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break *through* and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.*

[To prevent these, as well as other accidents of no less frequent occurrence, and even more formidable character, the walls of houses which are composed of clay or sun-dried bricks, are always built very thick. Great thickness is the more necessary, that owing to the long continued droughts of summer, large chinks are often formed, which, where the impetuous floods descend in the rainy season, would frequently occasion, but for this precaution in making them of extraordinary thickness, the complete destruction of the walls, or at least produce great damage. And, indeed, even with all the care that is taken to make their walls of the approved dimensions, nothing is more common in the East than to see walls bulging out in different parts, exhibiting the greatest deformity, and declining so much from the perpendicular, that it is wonderful they stand at all. The knowledge of this very familiar occurrence gives a beautiful propriety to those expressions of Scripture :—'As a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.'† 'This iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall.'‡

[Another very striking allusion to the frailty of those mud houses, and the sudden irremediable destruction in which they are frequently involved, is made by our Lord at the conclusion of his sermon on the Mount :—'Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth

* Matt. vi. 19, 20. † Psalm lxii. 3. ‡ Isaiah xxx. 13.

them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand; and the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell; and great was the fall of it.'* Impressive as this description is, viewed merely as a fancy-sketch, the great practical effect of the comparison on the assembled multitude, arose from its being a literal and unvarnished picture of scenes of desolation, with which, as natives of Palestine, they were painfully familiar. Long, and in some instances, dear-bought experience, taught them the great difference there was in their country, in point of durability, between a house which was planted on an elevated rocky bed, and one whose foundation was laid on the level sand. In the latter situation, unless very great precautions were taken to surround the habitation with a strong and impregnable fence, there was imminent risk of the frail tenement being entirely washed away by the torrents which descended in winter from the mountains, sweeping all before their impetuous tide; and it is not improbable, as our Lord's illustrations generally rose out of the circumstances of the time and place where he happened to be, that, from the conical hill where he delivered this instructive discourse, the traces of recent land-floods might be visible, and the havoc they had done to the humble exposed huts in the plain below, might yet be fresh in the public mind. But be this as it might, catastrophes of this unhappy nature, by which the people were suddenly left houseless and shelterless, were, and still are, of no unfrequent occurrence in the East, insomuch that the natives not only take them into account in choosing the

* Matthew vii. 24-27.

site for their dwelling-place, as well as in their manner of protecting the grounds immediately around it, but are accustomed to form their opinion of a house by calculating not how many years it will stand, but whether it is able to withstand the rain and the floods. Many instances of the disastrous occurrences occasioned by floods are recorded by travellers. Maundrell has given a very affecting account in his journey to Jerusalem, of an entire hamlet, which, with its adjacent fields and gardens, had been suddenly removed by the violent eruption of the waters to a great distance from its original site. Belzoni describes a similar scene of which he was an eye-witness in Egypt:—'I never saw any picture that could give a more correct idea of a deluge than the valley of the Nile in this season. The people had expected an extraordinary inundation this year, in consequence of the scarcity of water the preceding season; but they did not apprehend it would rise to such a height. They generally erect fences of earth and reeds around their villages, to keep off the water from their houses; but the force of this inundation baffled all their efforts. Their cottages, being built of earth, could not stand one instant against the current; and no sooner did the water reach them, than it levelled them with the ground. The rapid stream carried off all that was before it; men, women, children, cattle, corn, every thing was washed away in an instant, and left the place, where the village stood, without any thing to indicate that there ever had been a house on the spot.'* Ward informs us, that the Bengal fishermen, who build their huts in the dry season, on the beds of sand from which the river has retired, have them often swept away, when the rains set in, which they do very suddenly, accompanied with violent north-west winds; and, pouring down in cataracts along the steep hills, sweep the plain below of every trace of the frail mud-built tenements with which it

* Researches in Egypt, p. 299.

was covered.* One should think that acquaintance with the physical peculiarities of the climate and the country, should lead every man to guard against such contingencies, and prevent him from setting down a house intended for a permanent habitation, on a spot where the loose soil or the shifting sand will be sure to be displaced and carried away by the first violent flood that happens. But indolence, convenience, or business, often tempt men, in spite of all the considerations which their local knowledge may suggest against it, to settle in such insecure situations. Accordingly, every season repeats the tale of accidents occasioned by the devastations of the hurricane and the land flood; and shows, at the same time, the wisdom and propriety, in a region exposed to such casualties, of building houses on a rocky platform, where they are placed beyond the reach of the dangerous current. One small hut of clay, a recent traveller through Palestine informs us, he saw, that had remained scatheless and untouched by a violent inundation, which had laid in ruins many of the neighbouring houses. Could any figure, more expressive, have been selected to show the folly and the certain danger of contenting oneself with a merely nominal profession of religion,—with being a hearer only, and not a doer also of God's word. Who would not rather, by placing his hopes upon Christ, and uniting faith with good works, imitate the wisdom and prudence of the man who built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock.

[The preceding accounts of the frailty of mud-walled houses, and their liability to be dissolved into a heap of rubbish by the descent of the impetuous floods of the East, will serve to explain another passage of Scripture, which, for want of attention to the peculiarities of the region which is the scene of the book of Job, has

* Ward's Hindoos.

been involved in much obscurity :—'Behold he put no trust in his servants ; and his angels he charged with folly : how much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth? They are destroyed from morning to evening : they perish for ever, without any regarding it.'* These words form part of the appeal which the midnight apparition addressed to Eliphaz. They contain a very striking contrast between angels and men ; and the design of the argument, into which they are introduced, evidently leads us to consider that contrast as extending to all the points of comparison that can be instituted between these two classes of created beings—the exalted nature, intelligence, and purity of the one ; and the feebleness, ignorance, and numerous imperfections of the other. The object of the present remarks, which is simply an attempt to give the proper explanation of the passage, confines our view of this contrast exclusively to their comparative durability; and that this also is a point of comparison contemplated in the argument, is obvious from the 19th and 20th verses, in which the frail and transitory nature of man forms the leading idea.

[The ordinary way in which commentators explain these two latter verses, is by considering them as clothed in the figurative garb of poetry ; by supposing that 'houses of clay' is a term metaphorically put for the human body, and that 'to be crushed before the moth' is an elegant allusion, in the hyperbolical style of eastern imagery, to the slight, insignificant, and sudden causes, by which that slender frame is frequently dissolved ; and no doubt, when we consider that man is 'dust,' that 'unto dust he shall return,' and that his clayey tabernacle is liable to be 'crushed,' and to fall to pieces, before a thousand accidents of as trivial a kind as the touch of an insect's wing, this common interpretation sufficiently harmonizes with Scrip-

* Job, iv. 18-20.

ture and experience, to prevent its being rejected without good and substantial reasons. Accordingly it has been supposed by an intelligent traveller to refer to the fatal effects which the moth, in its egg or worm state, is well known to produce in Arabia :—'A disease,' says he, 'very common in that country, is the attack of the moth-worm, which is supposed to be occasioned by the use of the putrid waters, which people are obliged to drink in several parts of Arabia ; and for this reason, the natives always filter water, with the nature of which they are unacquainted, through a linen cloth, before drinking it. The disorder is not dangerous, if the person affected can extract the worm without breaking it. With this view, it is rolled on a small bit of wood, as it comes out of the skin. It is slender as a thread, and two or three feet long. It gives no pain nor trouble, as it makes its way out of the body, unless what may be occasioned by the care which must be taken of it for some weeks. If unluckily it be broken, it then returns into the body, and the most disagreeable consequences ensue,—palsy, a gangrene, and death.'* That the account of this eminent traveller and man of science, however, does not give the true meaning of the passage, appears from this circumstance, that it is totally inapplicable to the 20th verse, which is obviously a continuation of the sentiment of the preceding ; for although it is true, that, in the ordinary course of nature, men are passing off the stage of life every hour and every minute of the day, it cannot, except by a very forced construction, be said that they are *destroyed* from morning to evening ; and with as little propriety can it be said, in the great majority of cases, that 'they perish for ever, without any regarding it.' In order to preserve the harmony and consistency of these two verses, then, it is obviously necessary to resort to a different interpretation of their phraseology ; and, admitting as we do, that the frail

* Niebuhr.

and short-lived existence of man is the burden of the passage, we think that great force and beauty is imparted to it, by taking the words not in a figurative, but a literal sense, and considering them as an allusion to the customs and peculiarities of the place, where the scene of the memorable conference between Job and his friends is laid.

[In Arabia, as has been already said, the common houses are, for the most part, no better than thatched huts, their walls being composed of clay, dried and whitened in the sun; and though, with the view of giving them a little more thickness and stability, there is also added sometimes an internal framework of reeds, they are still after all but very fragile and unsubstantial fabrics; the more so, that, owing to the light character of the soil in that land, a solid substratum of rock or earth can no where be found, and the dwellings almost universally 'have their foundation in the dust,' or sand. In serene and settled weather, these ephemeral structures do well enough, and serve all the purposes of the natives; but amid the sudden and violent changes to which their climate is subject, when the face of the country is swept by the furious gusts of the tornado, or by the immense columns of moving sand that shift from place to place, these slight edifices are often overwhelmed, and their walls dashed down with resistless force to the ground. The owners, if they do not consult their safety by timely flight, are buried in the ruins, and every thing that has life is 'crushed' to death along with them. The only creature that has a chance of escape, is the moth-worm, which, from its diminutive size, and the soft yielding nature of the stuffs in which it makes its bed, has frequently, on excavating the flattened furniture, when the storm has ceased, been found surviving the human inmates of the dwelling. This well known fact gives a beautiful and striking propriety to the expression, 'they are crushed *before* the moth.' Moreover, the terrible convulsions

of nature, which occasion such catastrophes, are of course most uncertain and irregular in their occurrence; but for the most part, when they do happen, they begin early in the morning, about sun-rise, and continue their ravages, till they gradually abate about the close of the day. So that, as hurricanes in these latitudes are wonderfully uniform in their character and duration, and always make fearful havoc of the property and lives of men, it is true to the letter, that on such occasions 'they are destroyed from morning to evening.' Thus multitudes are often plunged into scenes of danger and death, before any of their neighbours are apprized of their situation; and even though intelligence were conveyed, the wide spread devastation obliging every one to confine his attentions to home, and rendering it perilous in the extreme to go abroad, and attempt the rescue of the sufferers, 'they perish for ever, without any regarding it.' According to this principle of interpretation, then, each successive clause has a natural meaning put upon it,—is shown to add a new circumstance important in the description; and the whole when grouped together, forms a picture of Arabian life as it is in the present day, and as it no doubt was in the days of Job and his contemporaries. The argument of the context, also, is placed in a stronger light; and the reader is better prepared to adopt the conclusion that, if the Almighty put no trust in the angels, though they are immortal, and secure beyond the reach of misery or danger, far less would he repose confidence in man whose frail nature is not only destined, in due course, to fall a prey to the influence of disease and death, but is liable at all times to be destroyed by a thousand sudden and violent calamities, from which no earthly friends, however zealous and sympathizing, can afford any deliverance.]

The short duration of mud-walled buildings is not the only objection to the use of unburnt brick; for in windy weather, the streets are incommoded with dust,

and with mire in time of rain. At Damascus, when a violent rain happens to fall, the whole city, by the washing of the houses, becomes as it were a quagmire.* So great is the quantity of dust and mire which sometimes accumulates in the streets of an eastern city, that the prophet Zechariah borrows a figure from it, of great force and significancy in the ear of an oriental, to denote the immense riches of Tyre:—'Tyrus did build herself a strong-hold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets.'† The beauty of the figure is lost if we attempt to judge of it by the state of an occidental city in modern times; but it will not be easy to conceive one more strikingly appropriate, if the streets of an eastern city, choaked with mire, or suffocated with dust, are considered. Dr Shaw directs the attention of his readers to the same circumstance, the dissolution of oriental buildings upon a shower, and supposes it may illustrate what Ezekiel observes respecting untempered mortar.‡ When that traveller was at Tozer, in the month of December, they had a small drizzling shower, which continued for the space of two hours; and so little provision was made against accidents of this kind, that several of the houses, which, as usual, were built only with palm branches, mud and tiles baked in the sun, fell down by imbibing the moisture of the shower. Nay, provided the drops had been either larger, or the shower of a longer continuance, he was persuaded the whole city would have dissolved and dropt to pieces.§ In his opinion, the phrase 'untempered mortar' refers to the square pieces of clay of which the wall is constructed; but, on looking at the text, it is evident that it refers to the plaster which is used in the East for covering the walls after they are built. The words of the prophet are:—'And one built up a wall, and lo,

* Maundrell's Journey, pp. 124, 125.
† Zech. ix. 3.
‡ Ezek. xiii. 11.
§ Shaw's Travels, vol. i. p. 250.

others daubed it with untempered mortar. . . . . Lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said unto you, Where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it?' The view which Chardin gives of this text is, therefore, to be preferred. According to that intelligent traveller, the mud walls fall down in consequence of the rain dissolving the plaster. This plaster hinders the water from penetrating the bricks; but when it has been soaked with wet, the wind cracks it, by which means the rain, in some succeeding shower, gets between and dissolves the whole mass. To this external coating of plaster, the prophet certainly refers, and not to the bricks, of which the wall is constructed; for these, however tempered, never can be supposed to resist the action of violent rains.* The ruinous effect of stormy winds and heavy rains upon such frail structures, is well described in the thirteenth verse, and exactly corresponds with the accounts of modern travellers:—'Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, I will even rend it with a stormy wind in my fury; and there shall be an overflowing shower in mine anger, and great hailstones in my fury to consume it. So will I break down the wall that ye have daubed with untempered mortar, and bring it down to the ground, so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered, and it shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in the midst thereof: and ye shall know that I am the Lord.' The same allusion is involved in the prediction of Amos, where he denounces the judgments of God against a profligate and refractory people:

* Harmer's Observations, vol. i. p. 287. Houses of clay would be ready to moulder if exposed to moisture, and entirely to melt away if exposed to heavy rain dashing against them. To prevent such a catastrophe, all the houses in the Cape colony are plastered over with fine mortar. Should only a small hole remain unnoticed in the plaster, a powerful rain will get into it, and probably *soon* be the destruction of the whole building. Well do I remember one deluge of rain that turned a new house of three floors absolutely into a mass of rubbish.—*Campbell's African Light*, p. 98.—*Editor.*

—'For, behold, the Lord commandeth, and he will smite the great house with breaches, and the little house with clefts.'* The palaces of the great, and the cottages of the poor, seem to have been constructed of the same fragile material; for they were affected by the storm and the tempest in the same manner, and when the cup of iniquity is full, are dissolved by the same shower.

Many of the oriental buildings, however, have displayed unrivalled magnificence and splendour. The walls, columns, floors, and minarets of the mosques were of the choicest marble, granite and porphyry, inlaid with agates and precious stones. The ornamental parts were of gold and silver, or consisted of the most elegant borders, with festoons of fruit and flowers in their natural colours, composed entirely of agates, cornelians, turquoises, lapis-lazuli, and other valuable gems. The hangings and carpets were of the richest manufacture: and the splendid edifice was illumined with chandeliers of massive gold. 'How forcibly,' says Forbes, 'do these remind us of the truth and beauty of the metaphorical language in the sacred page, promising sublime and spiritual joys, in allusion to these subjects in eastern palaces.' In the prophecies of Isaiah this most encouraging declaration is made to the Gentile nations:—'I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.'† [So also the state of the millennial church is described by John in the same magnificent style, under the emblem of a city distinguished by the beauty and splendour of its architecture. The building of the wall of it was jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the

* Amos vi. 11. † Isa. liv. 11, 12.

third, chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was of pure gold, as it were transparent glass. The gems, which are represented adorning this gorgeous city, are such as have ever been in most repute in the East; and there are actually some palaces and public buildings, whose entire walls, as well as the pavements of the floor, are inlaid with a profusion of these precious stones, and of silver and gold. 'The Dewan Khass,' says Franklin in his history of Shah Allun, 'is a building situated at the upper end of a spacious square, elevated upon a terrace of marble about four feet in height. In former times, it was adorned with excessive magnificence. It is about a hundred and fifty feet in length by forty in breadth. The roof is flat, supported by numerous columns of fine white marble, which have been richly ornamented with inlaid flowered work of different coloured stones; the cornices and borders have been decorated with a frieze and sculptured work. The ceiling was formerly encrusted with a rich foliage of silver throughout its whole extent. The delicacy of the inlaying in the compartments of the walls, is much to be admired; and it is a matter of bitter regret to see the barbarous ravages that have been made by picking out the different cornelians, and breaking the marble. Around the exterior of the cornice are the following lines written in letters of gold, upon a ground of white marble:—*If there be a paradise upon earth, it is this, it is this.* The royal baths, built by Shah Ichan, are situated a little northward of the Dewan Khass, and consist of three very large rooms, surmounted by domes of white marble. The inside of them, about two-thirds of the way up, is lined with white marble, having beau-

tiful borders of flowers worked in cornelians and other stones, executed with much taste.' Another describes a magnificent palace as so richly gilt and adorned, as to appear within and without a mountain of gold: and while we know there still are buildings of this splendid description in Persia, and other eastern countries, the probability is, that there were anciently edifices decorated in similar profusion with gold, silver, and precious stones, and serving as the models from which both Isaiah and John took their gorgeous description of the city which, in their prophecies, is made the emblem of the millennial church.

[In such magnificent edifices, and indeed in all houses not made of wood or stone, the eastern style of building has a peculiarity to which there is nothing analogous in the architecture of the west. An immense stone, similar in size to the druidical ruins of Stonehenge, but cut in the rectangular form, is placed at the junction of the two walls, intended and calculated by its ponderous weight, as well as by the strong cement that is used to fasten it, to give solidity and compactness to the neighbouring portions. With this view the block is laid several feet from the bottom, to press down the layer of small stones that form the corners of the base, and thereby perform an office of no small importance in ensuring the permanence and stability of the building. A stone of this description is prepared with unusual care, and indeed is regarded as so holy that it imparts sanctity to the rest of the edifice; and as the customs of orientals in the practice of the useful arts, as well as in their habits of life, have continued from time immemorial unaltered, it is more than probable,—it is certain, that such gigantic stones, which the eastern notions of architecture require, were hewn for insertion in the houses of the ancient inhabitants of that part of the world. In manifest reference to this custom, the psalmist, describing the prosperity which his country would enjoy if the

people remained stedfast in the ordinances and ways of the Lord, says, 'that our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace,' *i. e.* be prudent, industrious, amiable, and virtuous, qualified to sustain the important relations of wives and mothers, be the ornament of their families, and the bond of union between them. But a far more beautiful and striking allusion is made to this custom in another passage of the psalms, prophetic of the times of Messiah. One of these stones, which the pious care of David had provided towards the erection of that long meditated structure, had been rejected by the builders, probably as unsuitable, on account of its plainness and want of elegant proportions; and the oracle having been consulted, God, for reasons of importance, though not specified, had commanded the despised stone to be the only one employed as the chief corner stone:—'The stone which the builders refused, the same was made the head of the corner.'* It was a common occurrence for builders, out of the multitude of single stones that were usually made ready at the commencement of a building, to make their choice of the one best suited to be the chief corner stone—to reject one and prefer another—and it was, therefore, no singularity in the workmen at the temple to exercise the usual discretion. But the gospel history has revealed the symbolical meaning of this action, by showing that, just as the builders of the temple rejected a stone, and would have thrown it aside as worthless among the rubbish, which God afterwards commanded to be used in the walls of that splendid edifice; so the Jews refused and crucified Jesus, whom God, in his wise and holy sovereignty, exalted to be the chief stone of the corner, supporting the whole spiritual temple, and uniting the several

* Psalm cxviii. 22.

parts of it into one building, 'an habitation of God through the Spirit.']

In Africa, by the testimony of Dr Shaw, they beat their mortar with mallets;* but in Canaan and the surrounding regions, they trod it with their feet. To this last custom, the prophet clearly refers in his challenge to the heathen gods, to prove their title to divine honours, by disclosing the secrets of futurity:—'I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name; and he shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay.'† The allusion is still more clearly made by the prophet Nahum in his address to Nineveh:—'Draw thee waters for the siege, fortify thy strongholds: go into clay, and tread the mortar, make strong the brick kiln.'‡ To the same custom, although in more obscure terms, the prophet Malachi may be supposed to refer:—'Ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet.'§ In the opinion of some expositors, the wicked are here compared to ashes, because the prophet had been speaking of their destruction under the figure of burning. But the sacred writers, having a much higher object in view than to exemplify the rules of the rhetorician, do not always keep close to the figures with which they set out; and if they did, Malachi would not have expressed himself in such terms, unless the custom of treading ashes in making mortar or cement, had prevailed in his days.

The general style of building in the East, seems to have continued from the remotest ages down to the present times, without alteration or any attempt at improvement. Large doors, spacious chambers, marble pavements, cloistered courts, with fountains sometimes playing in the midst, are certainly conveniences well

* Trav. vol. i. p. 372.
† Isa. xli. 25.
‡ Nahum iii. 14.
§ Mal. iv. 3.

adapted to the circumstances of these hotter climates.* All the windows of their dwellings, if we except a small latticed window or balcony which sometimes looks into the street, open into their respective courts or quadrangles; an arrangement probably dictated by the jealousy which unceasingly disturbs the repose of an oriental householder. It is only during the celebration of some public festival, that these houses, and their latticed windows or balconies, are left open.'†

[The sides of the houses, indeed, that front the streets are nothing better than dead walls, the monotony of which is broken only by one or two windows, small, not glazed, but guarded by a grotesque frame of lattice work, and situated very high, which serves the double purpose of keeping the persons within from being too much exposed to the heat of the sun, and preventing them from being too much seen by those without. Through the small loop holes they can, unobserved, steal an occasional glance at the passers by; but it is only at public festivals, and on occasions of great public rejoicing, that they are fully opened, and that oriental ladies are permitted the unrestricted liberty of appearing at them. It was from a window of this description that the mother of Sisera looked out when she was expecting her son to return as a victorious general at the head of a triumphal procession.‡ And it was at a window of the same description that the spouse is described as showing himself: 'Behold he looketh forth at the windows, showing himself through the lattice.'§]

The streets of an oriental city, the better to shade the inhabitants from the sun, are commonly narrow, with sometimes a range of shops on each side. [The narrowness of the streets rendering it impossible for seve-

* Malcolm's Hist. of Persia, vol. ii. p. 522. Lady M. W. Montague's Letters, vol. i. p. 209.

† Shaw's Trav. vol. i. p. 37.

‡ Judges v. 28. § Song of Solomon, ii. 9.

ral persons to walk abreast, has given rise to the custom in the East of superiors always walking first, and consequently being obliged to speak in an elevated tone to those who belong to the company behind them. 'When two or more people go along the streets, they generally speak in a loud voice, that all who pass may hear. Has a person lost or gained a cause in a court of justice, he vociferates his story again and again to his companions as he goes along the road. Men, too, of a boisterous temper, who wish to raise a clamour, or who are leaders in any exploit, always bawl aloud when they talk to their companions as they go along, and hence the striking contrast in the description of Him who was meek and lowly in heart, and the Prince of peace:—'He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.'*] The entrance from the streets into one of the principal houses, is through a porch or gateway, with benches on each side, where the master of the family receives visits, and despatches business; few persons, not even the nearest relations, having further admission, except upon extraordinary occasions†. The door of the porch by which a person enters the court, is very small; sometimes not above three feet high. The design of such low and inconvenient doors is to prevent the Arabs from riding into the houses to plunder them; for these freebooters, who are almost centaurs, seldom think of dismounting in their excursions; and, therefore, the peaceable inhabitants find such small entrances, the easiest and most effectual way of preventing their violence. To this singular practice the royal preacher may be supposed to refer:—'He that exalteth his gate, seeketh destruction.'‡ It can hardly be supposed, that Solomon mentioned the loftiness of the gate, rather than other circumstances of magnificence in a building, as the wideness of the

* Isaiah xlii. 2.

† Shaw's Trav. vol. i. p. 374. Buckingham's Trav. vol. ii. p. 366. See also Malcolm's Hist. of Persia, vol. ii. p. 551. ‡ Prov. xvii. 19

house, the airiness of the rooms, the cedar ceilings, and the vermilion paintings, which the prophet Jeremiah specifies as pieces of grandeur, without some particular meaning. But if bands of Arabs had taken the advantage of large doors to enter into houses in his territories, or in the surrounding kingdoms, the apophthegm possesses a singular propriety and force.* We have the more reason to believe that Solomon had his eye on the insolence of the Arabs, in riding into the houses of those they meant to plunder, because the practice seems not to have been unusual in other countries ; and is not now peculiar to those plunderers. The Armenian merchants at Julfa, the suburb of Ispahan, in which they reside, find it necessary to make the front door of their houses in general small, partly to hinder the Persians, who treat them with great rigour and insolence, from entering them on horseback, and partly to prevent them from observing the magnificent furniture within. But the habitation of a man in power is known by his gate, which is generally elevated in proportion to the vanity of its owner. A lofty gate is one of the insignia of royalty ; and it must have been the same in ancient times. The gates of Jerusalem, of Zion, and other places, are often mentioned in the Scripture with the same notions of grandeur annexed to them ; thus the Psalmist addresses the gates of Zion :—' Lift up your heads, O ye gates ; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors : and the King of glory shall come in.' †

* The doors do not admit of a man's entering them upright ; but as the bottom is dug out about two feet, an erect posture is quite practicable within. It is to this descent at the entrance, that the prophet Zephaniah alludes, when, describing the plundering Arabs, who enter on horseback, he says, they *leap on*, or rather *over*, the threshold ; Zeph. i. 9.—*Editor.*

† Psa. xxiv. 7. Morier's Trav. vol. i. p. 135. The gates of the temple were indeed as described, very lofty and magnificent, in proportion to the gigantic dimensions of that extraordinary edifice. But the phrase *lift up your heads* refers not so much to their loftiness as to the upper part being formed so as to be lifted up ; while the under portion opened in folding doors.—*Editor.*

[The possession of a lofty gate, however, is not exclusively the boast of royalty; for most of the principal grandees in Persia have, besides the common small doors, spacious entrances into their houses, to which are attached gates of the most magnificent description. These, the lintels or pillars of which are decorated with exquisite carved work, and the wood of which is beautifully painted or gilt, are, when finished, closed up by a fence of planks, to prevent them sustaining injury from the sun or the weather,—which are not removed till the arrival of the prince, who, on the erection of a new palace by any of his courtiers, is always invited to a sumptuous entertainment in the mansion. On the day of the festival, he enters by the principal gate, which being reserved for him alone, is, whenever the gala days are over, closed up with planks as before, never again to be opened, unless the king should at a future period be pleased to confer a similar honour on the proprietor. Such a custom is an example of the profound awe and veneration which orientals are taught to feel for the person of majesty; and in conformity with these impressions is the language of Ezekiel:—'He brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary, which looketh toward the east, and it was *shut*. Then said the Lord to me, This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the Lord, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut.*]

From the gate of the porch, one is conducted into the quadrangular court, which, being exposed to the weather, is paved with stone or marble, in order to carry off the water in the rainy season. The principal design of this quadrangle is to give light to the house, and admit the fresh air into the apartments; it is also the place where the master of the house entertains his company, which are seldom or never honoured with admission into the inner apartments.† This open space

* Ezekiel xliv. 1, 2. † See Morier's Trav. vol. i. pp. 78, 81.

bears a striking resemblance to the *impluvium* or *cava œdium* of the Romans, which was also an uncovered area, from whence the chambers were lighted. For the accommodation of the guests, the pavement is covered with mats or carpets; and as it is secured against all interruption from the street, is well adapted to public entertainments. It is called, says Dr Shaw, the middle of the house, and literally answers to the το μεσον of the Evangelist, into which the man afflicted with the palsy was let down through the tiling, with his couch, before Jesus.* Hence, he conjectures that our Lord was at this time instructing the people in the court of one of these houses; and it is by no means improbable, that the quadrangle was to him and his apostles a favourite situation, while they were engaged in disclosing the mysteries of redemption. To defend the company from the scorching sun-beam, or 'windy storm and tempest,' a veil was expanded upon ropes from the one side of the parapet wall to the other, which might be folded or unfolded at pleasure.† The Psalmist seems to allude either to the tents of the Bedouins, or to some covering of this kind, in that beautiful expression of spreading out the heavens like a veil or curtain.‡ We have the same allusion in the sublime strains of Isaiah:—'It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.§

'The court is, for the most part, surrounded with a cloister, over which, when the house has a number of

* Luke, v. 19. † Forbes's Orient. Mem. vol. ii. p. 459.

‡ Psa. civ. 2.

§ Isa. xl. 22. 'As this,' says Dr Wilde, adopting the conjecture of Dr Shaw, 'was in all probability the description of houses used in Judea in the days of our Saviour, and not the present dome-roofed house, which the constant warfare of that country has made necessary, it was the removing of such light covering as this that is spoken of in the gospel, when the people uncovered the roof to let the paralytic down.—*Travels*, vol. i. p. 308.—*Editor.*

stories, a gallery is erected of the same dimensions with the cloister, having a balustrade, or else a piece of carved or latticed work, going round about, to prevent people from falling from it into the court.'* The doors of the enclosure round the house, as already mentioned, are made very small, to defend the family from the insolence and rapacity of Arabian plunderers; but the doors of the houses very large, for the purpose of admitting a copious stream of fresh air into their apartments. The windows which look into the street, are very high and narrow, and defended by lattice work; as they are only intended to allow the cloistered inmate a peep of what is passing without, while he remains concealed behind the casement.† This kind of window the ancient Hebrews called Arubah, and is the same term which they used to express those small openings, through which pigeons passed into the cavities of the rocks, or into those buildings which were raised for their reception. Thus the prophet demands, 'Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves *(el arubothehem)* to their small or narrow windows?' The word is derived from a root, which signifies to lie in wait for the prey; and is very expressive of the concealed manner in which a person examines, through that kind of window, an external object. Irwin describes the windows in Upper Egypt, as having the same form and dimensions; and says expressly, that one of the windows of the house in which they lodged, and through which they looked into the street, more resembled a pigeon hole, than any thing else.‡ But the sacred writers mention another kind of window, which was large and airy; it was called *halon*, and was large enough to admit a person of mature age being cast out of it; a punishment which that profligate

* Shaw's Travels.

† 'The lattices are so constructed,' says Forbes, 'as to prevent the rays of the sun, while they admit the light.'—*Orient. Mem.* vol. iv. p. 65.

‡ Pp. 185, 201.

woman Jezebel suffered by the command of Jehu, the authorised exterminator of her family.*

These large windows admit the light and the breeze, into spacious apartments of the same length with the court, but which seldom or never communicate with one another.† In the houses of the fashionable and the gay, the lower part of the walls is adorned with rich hangings of velvet or damask, tinged with the liveliest colours, suspended on hooks, or taken down at pleasure. A correct idea of their richness and splendour may be formed from the description which the inspired writer has given of the hangings in the royal garden at Shushan, the ancient capital of Persia :—'Where were white, green, and blue hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple, to silver rings and pillars of marble.'‡ The upper part of the wall is adorned with the most ingenious wreathings and devices, in stucco and fret-work. The ceiling is generally of wainscot, painted with great art, or else thrown into a variety of pannels with gilded mouldings. In the days of Jeremiah the prophet, when the profusion and luxury of all ranks of Judea were at their height, their chambers were ceiled with fragrant and costly wood, and painted with the richest colours. Of this extravagance, the indignant seer loudly complains :—'Woe unto him that saith, I will build me a wide house and large § chambers, and cutteth him out windows : and it is ceiled with cedar, and painted with vermilion.'|| The floors of these splendid apartments were laid with painted

* Shaw's Travels, vol. i. pp. 374, 375.

† Every apartment is approached by a separate door from the quadrangular court; and servants often sleep at the door of the chamber in which their master is. The reader will remember the instance of Uriah sleeping at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his Lord.—*Editor.*

‡ Esther i. 6.

§ The word in Hebrew here translated large, signifies well or thoroughly aired,—an expression which renders obvious the purpose for which the chambers were made so large.—*Editor.*

|| Jer. xxii. 14.

tiles, or slabs of the most beautiful marble. A pavement of this kind is mentioned in the book of Esther; at the sumptuous entertainment which Ahasuerus made for the princes and nobles of his vast empire, 'the beds' or couches upon which they reclined, 'were of gold and silver, upon a pavement of red and blue, and white and black marble.' Plaster of terrace is often used for the same purpose; and the floor is always covered with carpets, which are for the most part of the richest materials. Upon these carpets, a range of narrow beds, or mattresses, is often placed along the sides of the wall, with velvet or damask bolsters, for the greater ease and convenience of the company.* To these luxurious indulgences, the prophets occasionally seem to allude: Ezekiel was commanded to pronounce a 'woe to the women that sew pillows to the arm-holes, or elbows;† and Amos denounces the judgments of his God against them 'that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall.'‡ At one end of each chamber is a little gallery, called a divan, raised three or four feet above the floor, with a balustrade in front, to which they go up by a few steps, and often extending the whole length and breadth of the room. Here they place their beds,§ cushions, or carpets, on which, as they use no chairs, they sit or recline. Dr Russel describing it, says it is a part of the room, a little elevated above the floor, and spread with a carpet in winter, with fine mats in summer; along the sides are thick mattresses about three feet wide, covered commonly with scarlet cloth; and large

* Shaw's Travels, vol. i. p. 378. † Ezek. xiii. 18.

‡ Amos, vi. 4. 'Ivory is so plentiful in the East, it is no wonder,' says Mr Roberts, 'that the sovereigns had their beds made principally of that article. But why is there a distinction made in reference to *beds* and *couches*? I believe the latter word refers to swinging cots, which are always found in the houses of the voluptuous.' The adoption of these luxurious refinements by the Hebrews, shows the state of that people in the time of Amos.—*Editor.*

§ Buckingham's Trav. vol. ii. p. 254.

bolsters of brocade, hard-stuffed with cotton, are set against the walls or rails, where they are so situated as not to touch the wall, for the convenience of leaning. All their rooms are furnished with these divans, and particularly the chamber of audience, where company is received. The corner of the divan is the place of honour, and to be invited to sit there along with the host, is one of the highest compliments that can be paid to a visitor. The beds on which they repose are often laid on the same raised platform; a situation frequently alluded to in the Holy Scriptures: Thus Jacob addressed his undutiful son in his last benediction:—'Thou wentest up to thy father's bed, . . . he went up to my couch.'* The allusion is again involved in the declaration of Elijah to the king of Samaria:—'Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.'† And the Psalmist sware unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob, 'Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed, ... until I find out a place for the Lord.'‡ This arrangement may likewise illustrate the circumstance of Hezekiah's 'turning his face to the wall when he prayed,' that the greatness of his sorrow, and the fervour of his devotion, might as much as possible be concealed from his attendants.§ The same thing is related of Ahab, although we have no reason to think it was upon a religious account, but in order to conceal from those about him the anguish he felt for his late disappointment; or, perhaps, by so great a show of sorrow, to provoke them to devise some means to gratify his wishes:—'And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.'‖

The eastern beds consist merely of two thick cotton

* Gen. xlix. 4.
† 2 Kings, i. 4, 16.
‡ Psa. cxxxii. 3.
§ 2 Kings, xx. 2.
‖ 1 Kings, xxi. 4.

quilts, one of which, folded double, serves as a mattress, the other as a covering,* and the natives sleep generally in the clothes they wear during the day. Such was the bed of David, which could easily be carried with himself in it to the presence of Saul:—'Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him;'† and that on which the paralytic was let down,‡ seemed to be of the same kind. It was, therefore, no impracticable task which our Lord imposed upon the latter, to take up his bed and go into his house; nor, when properly explained, does it present to our minds an absurd or incongruous idea. [The phraseology in which our Lord, on this as on other occasions, announced the accomplishment of a perfect cure, was the most natural and simple language that a native of the East could use, as will appear from the following interesting little incident narrated by Captain Wall:—'On the morning,' says he, 'after my arrival at Bombay, I got up with the first blush of the dawn, and proceeded alone in quest of adventures. I had not gone far before I saw a native sleeping on a mat, spread in the little verandah, extending along the front of his house, which was made up of basket-work, plastered over with mud. He was wrapped up in a

* The bed or mattress was in the morning thrown aside into a small corner or recess made for the purpose, which would, in times of danger, afford a good place of concealment. To this Amos alludes:—'As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs or a piece of an ear, so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria in the corner of a bed;' *i. e.* in the place or corner where the bed is deposited. If a person be hid, he shall be taken out; and so shall the children of Israel who have taken refuge in Samaria be taken out.—*Editor.*

† 1 Sam. xix. 15. It is a very common thing for the orientals to feign themselves sick when they wish to get rid of any troublesome task, or have any secret design in view; 'and nowhere in the world,' says Mr Roberts, 'are there more expert creatures in this kind of deception. They have a pain here, another there; they affect to pant for breath, roll their eyes as if in agony: and, should you touch them, they shriek out as if you were killing them.' The reader of the Bible will remember the case of David, when he feigned himself mad; the case of Michal, who pretended that David was sick; and the case also of his infamous son Ammon.—*Editor.*

‡ Luke, v. 19.

long web of white linen or cotton cloth. As soon as the first rays of the sun peeped into his rude sleeping-chamber, he "arose, took up his, bed, and walked away" into his house. I saw immediately an explanation of this expression, which, with slight variations, occurs frequently in the gospels. In connexion with several of the most striking and impressive of Christ's miracles, particularly with that of the sick man of the palsy, the Hindoo got on his feet, cast the long folds of his wrapper over his shoulder, stooped down, and, having rolled up his mat, which was all the bed he required, he walked into the house with it, and proceeded to the nearest temple to perform his morning ablutions. To command the paralytic, then, to take up the bed in which he lay, was just bidding him attend to the first piece of business which his circumstances required; and his ready compliance showed that the divine power of Christ had restored to him the ability of performing that personal office which every native of the East, who has been upon a bed, is accustomed to render to himself every morning.] No doubt, however, can be entertained, that the number of their mattresses and coverlets was increased or diminished, as more or less warmth might be required, and the proprietors could afford. An eastern bed occasionally consists of four or five parts, richly ornamented. Baron du Tott describes one in which he was expected to sleep, which had neither bedstead nor curtains; but consisted of many mattresses of quilted cotton, about three inches thick, placed one upon another, covered with a sheet of Indian linen, a coverlet of green satin, adorned with gold embroidery, in embossed work; two large pillows of crimson satin, covered with similar embroidery, and a profusion of gold and spangles, resting on two cushions, which served as a back, and were intended to support the head.* The harlot's bed, of which she vaunted so greatly, was adorned

* Memoirs, vol. i. p. 95. Buckingham's Trav. vol. i. p. 102.

after this manner :—‘ I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt ; I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.’*

In the hottest part of the day the orientals retire to rest on their bed, till the cool of the evening summons them again to active life. ‘ The heathens,’ says Mr Blunt, ‘ assigned all the properties and habits of man to their gods, and among the number that of reposing at mid-day. Hence was it unlawful to enter the temples at that hour, lest their slumbers should be disturbed. The goat-herd ventured not to play upon his pipe at noon for fear of awakening Pan.† Hence, too, the peculiar force of the derision with which Elijah addressed the priest of Baal :—‘ And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud : for he is a god, . . . peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked.’‡ Accordingly we read that these priests did not despair of rousing their god, and inducing him to declare himself, ‘ till the time of evening sacrifice.’ At that hour the period allowed for repose had terminated : and when he still continued deaf to their cries, then, and not till then, their cause became altogether hopeless.’§

When the houses were not contiguous, the staircase, according to the description of some travellers, was conducted along the outside of the house ; but when they were built close together it was placed in the porch, or at the entrance into the court, and continued through one corner of the gallery or another to the top of the house. For the sake of greater privacy, and to prevent the domestic animals from daubing the terrace, and by that means spoiling the water which falls from thence into the cisterns below the court, a door was hung on the top of the stair, and kept constantly shut. This

* Prov. vii. 16, 17.
† Theocrit. Idyll. i. l. 15.
‡ 1 Kings, xviii. 27.
§ Blunt’s Vestiges of Ancient Customs, pp. 109, 110.

door, like most others to be met with in those countries, is hung, not with hinges, but by having the jamb formed at each end into an axle-tree or pivot; of which the uppermost, which is the longest, is to be received into a correspondent socket in the lintel, whilst the other falls into a similar cavity in the threshold. Doors with hinges of the same kind are still to be seen in the East. The stone door, so much admired by Mr Maundrell, is exactly of this fashion, and very common in most places.* 'The staircase is uniformly so contrived, that a person may go up or come down by it, without entering into any of the offices or apartments; and, by consequence, without disturbing the family, or interfering with the business of the house. In allusion to this method of building, our Lord commands his disciples, when the Roman armies entered Judea, to 'flee to the mountains;' and adds, 'Let him that is on the house top, not go down into the house, neither enter therein to take any thing out of his house.'† They were commanded to flee from the top of the house to the mountains, without entering the house; which was impossible to be done, if the stairs had not been conducted along the outside of it, by which they could escape.‡

The roof is always flat, and often composed of branches of wood laid across rude beams,§ and to defend it from the injuries of the weather, to which it is peculiarly exposed in the rainy season, it is covered with a strong plaster of terrace. It is surrounded by a wall breast high, which forms the partition with the contiguous houses, and prevents one from falling into the street on the one side, or into the court on the other.‖ This answers to the battlements which Moses com-

* Dr Richardson's Travels, vol. ii. p. 2.

† Mark xiii. 15; and Matthew xxiv. 17.

‡ Shaw's Travels, vol. ii. p. 379.

§ Buckingham's Travels, vol. ii. p. 328.

‖ Shaw's Travels, vol. i. p. 380. Russel's History of Aleppo, vol. i. p. 35. Buckingham's Travels in Palestine, vol. i. pp. 122, 147, &c.

manded the people of Israel to make for the roof of their houses, for the same reason:—'When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence.'* Instead of the parapet wall, some terraces are guarded, like the galleries, with balustrades only, or latticed work. Of the same kind, probably, was the lattice or net, as the term *shebaca* seems to import, through which Ahaziah, the king of Samaria, fell down into the court.† This incident proves the necessity of the law which Jehovah graciously dictated from Sinai, and furnishes a beautiful example of his paternal care and goodness; for the terrace was a place where many offices of the family were performed, and business of no little importance was occasionally transacted. Rahab concealed the spies on the roof, with the stalks of flax which she had laid in order to dry;‡ the king of Israel, according to the custom of his country, rose from his bed, and walked upon the roof of his house, to enjoy the refreshing breezes of the evening;§ upon the top of the house, the prophet conversed with Saul, about the gracious designs of God, respecting him and his family;‖ to the same place, Peter retired to offer up his devotions;¶ and, in the feast of tabernacles, under the government of Nehemiah, booths were erected, as well upon the terraces of their houses, as in their courts, and in the streets of the city.** In Judea, the inhabitants sleep upon the tops of their houses during the heats of summer, in arbours made of the branches of trees, or in tents of rushes. When Dr Pococke was at Tiberias in Galilee, he was entertained by the sheik's steward, and, with his company, supped upon the top of the house for coolness, according to their custom,

* Deuteronomy xxii. 8. † 2 Kings i. 2.

‡ Joshua ii. 6. [It is very common to spread out stalks of flax on the roof to dry in the present day.]—*Editor.*

§ 2 Samuel xi. 2. ‖ 1 Samuel ix. 25. ¶ Acts x. 9.

** Nehemiah viii. 16.

and lodged there likewise, in a sort of closet of about eight feet square, formed of wicker work, plastered round towards the bottom, but without any door, each person having his cell.* In like manner, the Persians take refuge during the day in subterraneous chambers, and pass the night on the flat roofs of their houses.†

It is extremely probable that Saul, in like manner, was lodged upon the roof of Samuel's house, when he went to consult him about his father's asses; for it appears from the preceding statement, that the inhabitants of Galilee were accustomed to entertain and lodge a stranger whom they respected, upon the top of the house. Our translators, indeed, understood the passage differently; for they make Samuel invite Saul a second time to the roof of the house, before he sent him away: their version runs in these words:—'And they rose early; and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away.' But the particle *to*, may be rendered *on;* and the phrase will then be read, he called Saul on the top of the house, where he had slept all night, in an arbour, or closet of wicker work, and which he had not yet left. In this light the Septuagint also seem to have understood the passage; for they translate it:—'And they spread a bed for Saul upon the house-top, and he slept.' Samuel might naturally enough wish to converse with his future sovereign a second time, before he allowed him to depart, upon a subject so interesting to them both, and to all the tribes of Israel; but it will appear, from a careful inspection of the text, that they did not go up a second time to the roof of the house, for the moment 'Saul arose, they went out both of them, he and Samuel abroad.' But a Hebrew never expresses himself in this manner, when he means that one goes

* Harmer's Observations, vol. i. p. 150, &c. See also Buckingham's Travels, vol. ii. p. 360.

† Kinnier's Geographical Memoir of the Persian Empire, p. 107.

up to the roof; the words of the record plainly mean they left the house, and did so without delay. This is confirmed by the next circumstance mentioned in the narrative, which followed immediately:—'As they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us.' Every circumstance forcibly suggests the idea that, instead of going up to the terrace, they went into the street, and walked down to the end of the city, where the prophet had resolved to impart unto Saul the important message he had received from Heaven. Hence the future king of Israel slept on the roof of Samuel's house, and there was called up at the dawn of day, by the faithful servant of the Lord, to receive his inauguration, and return to his father.* In Persia, too, they spread their beds, at night, upon the tops of their houses, on which they repose, without any other covering than the vault of heaven. They find this much more refreshing than sleeping in a close apartment.†

But how pleasant soever the arbour, or wicker closet, upon the roof, may be, during the burning heats of summer, it must be very disagreeable in the rainy season. They who lodge in either at that time, must be exposed continually to the storm beating in upon them from every quarter.‡ In allusion, perhaps, to this uncomfortable situation, Solomon observes:—'It is better to dwell in a corner of the house-top, than with a brawling woman in a wide house;' § or in a corner formed with boughs or rushes into a little arbour, which, although cool and pleasant in the dry and sultry months of summer, is a cold and cheerless lodge when the earth is drenched with rain, or covered with snow. The royal preacher, in another proverb, compares the contentions of a wife to the continual dropping of an arbour, placed upon the house-top, in

* Harmer's Observations, vol. i. p. 274.

† Morier's Travels, vol. i. p. 230. [Carne saw the same thing also frequently in Palestine.]—*Editor.*

‡ Harmer's Observ. vol. i. p. 276. § Prov. xxi. 9.

the rainy season, than which it is not easy to conceive any thing more disagreeable. 'The contentions of a wife are a continual dropping,' an incessant and unavoidable cause of uneasiness or vexation. Instructed probably by his own feelings, harassed and goaded, as was meet, by the daily quarrels of his seraglio, he returns in a succeeding apophthegm to the subject:—'A continual dropping in a very rainy day, and a contentious woman, are alike.'* It appears from these proverbs, that the booths were generally constructed in the corner, where two walls met, for greater safety; for, on the middle of the roof, they had been too much exposed to the storm. This is confirmed by Dr Russel, who remarks, in a manuscript note, that these booths in Syria are often placed near the walls; so minutely correct are even the most incidental observations of the inspired writers.

The custom of walking upon the roof in the cool of the day, to inhale the refreshing breeze, and to survey the surrounding scenery, may serve to explain another scripture incident of considerable interest, which does not appear to have been generally understood. It is thus recorded in the prophecies of Daniel:—'At the end of twelve months, he (Nebuchadnezzar) walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.'† The true

* Prov. xix. 13; and xxvii. 15. [The following passage from the Researches of Mr Hartley, to which we have been already so much indebted, will show that it is not necessary to suppose an arbour on every house, through which there is a continual dropping in a very rainy day:—'We retired to rest in what appeared one of the best rooms, which we have occupied during our journey; but at midnight, we were roused by the rain passing through the roof, and I found it necessary to rise and dress. In flat-roofed houses this is a frequent occurrence. I discover in this adventure an illustration of Prov. xxvii. 15, which the Septuagint has rendered, "Drops of rain in a wintry day drive a man out of his house; and just so a railing woman." The vulgate speaks expressly of the roof through which the water passeth. I was literally driven out of the house by the rain descending through the roof; and sought for shelter in the corridor, which was better protected.'—Pp. 283, 284.]—*Editor.*

† Dan. iv. 29.

sense of the original is, 'he walked upon the palace;' but this interpretation our translators have placed in the margin, as more doubtful than the other. If Nebuchadnezzar walked in some apartment of his palace, it is not easy to account for the proud and rapturous exclamation which suddenly burst from his mouth—we can see no proper excitement, no adequate cause; but if we suppose him walking upon the roof of his palace, which proudly rose above the surrounding habitations, and surveying the vast extent, the magnificence, and the splendour, of that great city, the mistress of the world—its walls of prodigious height and thickness—its hanging gardens, reputed one of the most astonishing efforts of art and power—its glittering palaces—the Euphrates rolling his majestic flood through the middle of the place, shut in on both sides by strong bulwarks and doors of brass; it was quite natural for such a man to feel elated with the sight, and indulge his pride and arrogance in the manner described by the prophet.*

When an oriental city is built upon level ground, one may pass along the tops of the houses from one end of it to the other, and escape into the country without coming down into the street; for the partition walls being only breast high, may be climbed over with ease. The bazaars are terraced, like the dwellings, affording a common road for foot passengers; and wherever a street intervenes, a bridge is thrown over, and the line continues uninterrupted.† This peculiar structure of the eastern houses affords another illustration, both of the propriety and practicability of that direction which our Lord gave his disciples to flee to the mountains, without entering their houses, when the Roman armies invaded their country.‡

[Our Lord assumed that at that fearful crisis they

* See Harmer's Observations, vol. i. p. 275.

† Morier's Travels, vol. i. p. 321.

‡ Shaw's Trav. vol. i. p. 381. De Tott's Mem. vol. ii. p. 342.

would, in common with multitudes of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, be crowding the tops of the houses, and he exhorted them, instead of creating delay by first descending into the interior of their dwelling to equip themselves for a distant journey, to proceed directly along the terraced roofs, which was both an easy and practicable way, with the additional advantage of ensuring greater rapidity and freedom of flight. The assumption which their divine Master made in this exhortation was founded on what he well knew to be a common custom in the country for the citizens to repair to the house-top on the first signal of public or sudden commotion in the *town*. 'It is usual,' says Mr Hartley, 'on every alarm of fire, for all persons instantly to rush to the roof in order from that height to discover the direction in which the fire has made its appearance. Very frequently the cry, fire! startles the sleeping inhabitants of a town from their slumbers, and gives a practical illustration of the scriptural language, "What aileth thee now that thou art wholly gone up to the house-tops?"* That persons who are in haste to place themselves out of the reach of impending danger, can effect their escape by the flat roof equally well, nay faster than by descending the staircase to the street, may be shown by one anecdote out of many that might be told. On the appalling occasion of the earthquake, which laid the greater part of Aleppo in ruins in 1822, an English merchant, of the name of Barker, was asleep on the terrace of his house when the first shock aroused him from his repose. Starting to his feet, and without stopping to dress himself, he was bending his hurried steps towards the flight of steps that conducted him into the apartments below; but, on second thoughts, considering that to remain in the house, or to go by the street amid falling houses would be attended with equal danger, he ran along the roof towards the back stairs, and relinquish-

* Isaiah xxii. 1.

ing every thing in his house, made for the fields.* It is not, however, only in cases of sudden alarm that people resort to the house-top as a convenient place for gaining intelligence, but as this elevated position is favourable for hearing as well as for seeing, it is the chosen spot where the public crier announces the approach of a great man, gives notification of a birth or a death, and whence the priests and others frequently pronounce their addresses to the people. When our Lord, therefore, told his disciples, that whatever they had heard him communicate of the things pertaining to the kingdom of heaven in their own private ear, they were to proclaim it on the house-tops, this familiar conversational way of speaking was understood by them as a commission to go and preach the gospel every where. It remains only to notice a curious practice connected with this subject, which is, that persons who have for a length of time been absent from home, or thought dead, usually re-enter, not by the gate, but over the roof. Major Skinner, being invited to partake of the hospitality of a native of Palestine he had become acquainted with in his travels, when he entered the town where his future host resided, was conducted by him up a flight of steps, and over the roofs of several houses, till he came to his own.†]

These statements enable us to explain, in a satisfactory manner, an incident in the history of our Redeemer, which has sometimes excited the profane mirth of unbelievers. It is thus described by the sacred writer :—'And they came unto him, bringing one sick

* A curious anecdote is related by Jowett respecting a man in the town of Safet, whose ass had broken with its hoof the plastered terrrace of a house over which it was passing, and the case was brought before the authorities of the place, to determine which was to pay the damage, the owner of the beast, or the superintendents of the public street.—*Editor.*

† See Hajji Baba, which, though a fictitious work, is full of illustrations of Eastern manners.—*Editor.*

of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was; and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.'* Among other pretended difficulties and absurdities relating to this fact, it has been urged, that, as the uncovering, or breaking up of the roof, as mentioned by Mark, or the letting a person down through it, as recorded by Luke, supposes the breaking up of tiles, spars, rafters, &c. 'So,' says the infidel, 'it was well if Jesus and his disciples escaped with only a broken pate, by the falling of the tiles, and if the rest were not smothered with dust.' But if the construction of an oriental dwelling be recollected, we shall find nothing in the conduct of these men either absurd in itself, or hazardous to others. Dr Shaw contends, that no violence was offered to the roof, and that the bearers only carried the paralytic up to the top of the house, either by forcing their way through the crowd up the staircase, or else by conveying him over some of the neighbouring terraces; and these, after they had drawn away the σεἐγη, or veil, let him down along the side of the roof (through the opening, or *impluvium*) into the midst of the court before Jesus.† But this ingenious explanation is encumbered with several important difficulties. The natural and obvious idea which the text suggests to the mind is, that the roof of the house was actually opened, and the paralytic let down through the tiling, or roof, into the upper apartment where Jesus was sitting; while an elaborate process of criticism is necessary to elicit the sense of the learned author; this is a circumstance strongly in favour of the common exposition. Besides, he has produced no proof that σεἐγη ever signifies a veil, for which the sacred writers, in particular, employ other words, as Καλυμμα, Καταπετασμα; but its usual meaning is the roof, or flat terrace of a house, and by an easy transi-

* Mark ii. 3, 4. † Shaw's Travels, vol. i. pp. 382, 383.

tion, the house itself.* Nor has he assigned a sufficient reason for the use of the strong term εξορυξαντες, by which he is evidently embarrassed. He endeavours, in the first place, to get quit of it altogether, by observing that it is omitted in the Cambridge manuscript, and not regarded in the Syriac, and some other versions. But conscious it could neither be expunged, nor disregarded upon such authority, he thinks 'it may be considered as further explanatory of απεσεγασαν; or, as in the Persian version, referred either to the letting down of the bed, or, preparatory thereto, to the making holes in it for the cords to pass through.' But the word cannot, with propriety, be considered as a further explanation of απεσεγασαν; for it has quite a different meaning: it signifies to dig out, to break up, or pluck out, and always involves the idea of force and violence; but no violence, and but very little exertion, was necessary to fold back the veil, which was expanded by cords over the court. Nor can it be referred to the removal of other obstructions; for, when the veil was removed, no further obstruction remained. It cannot, in this place, signify to tie the four corners of the bed or bedstead with cords, for it bears no such meaning in any other part of the Holy Scriptures, or in any classic author; and since it is more naturally constructed with σεγη than with κραββατον, it ought to be referred to the former.

Pearce, in his miracles of Jesus vindicated, offers another solution; according to him, they opened the trap door, which used to be on the top of the houses in Judea, and which, lying even with the roof, was a part of it when it was let down and shut. But with regard to this exposition, Parkhurst justly observes, that the most natural interpretation of αποσεγαζειν, is to unroof, break up the roof, and that the verb is twice used by Strabo, as cited by Elsner and Wetstein, in this sense; which also best agrees with the following word, εξορυ-

* Parkhurst, p. 625.

ξαντες.* The history, as recorded by the evangelists Mark and Luke, seems to be this:—Jesus, after some days absence, returned to Capernaum, and to the house where he used to dwell. And when it was reported that he was there, the people crowded to the square court, about which the house was built, in such numbers that there was no room for them, even though they filled the porch. The men who carried the paralytic, endeavoured to bring him into the court among the crowd; but, finding this impossible, they went up the staircase which led from the porch (or possibly came from the terrace of a neighbouring house) to the flat roof of the house, over the upper room in which Jesus was, Και εξορυξαντες; and having forced up as much both of the tiles or plaster, and of the boards on which they were laid, as was necessary for the purpose, they let down the paralytic's mattress, δια των κεραμων, through the tiles or roof, into the midst of the room before Jesus. This operation, under the careful management of these men, who must have been anxious not to incommode the Saviour and his auditory, could be attended with no danger. The tiles or plaster might be removed to another part of the flat roof, and the boards likewise, as they were broken up; and as for the spars, they might be sufficiently wide to admit the narrow couch of the sick man, without moving any of them from their places. It may be even inferred from the silence of the two evangelists, that the company suffered not the least inconvenience; and the infidel can produce the testimony of no writer in support of his insinuations. But though we were unable to remove the objection, or silence the ridicule of the unbeliever, it is in every respect better to abide by the natural and obvious sense of the passage.†

* See also Schleusneri Lexicon.

† In a note of a former page, we adverted to Dr Shaw's conjecture, that the paralytic man was let down into the open court, by simply raising and furling the awning, which, in the middle of the

Many of the oriental princes and nobles have a favourite upper chamber, to which they retire from the fatigues of state and the hurry of business.* To such a retired apartment the Saviour and his disciples withdrew to celebrate the passover before he suffered.†

To most of these houses a smaller one is annexed, which sometimes rises one story higher than the house; and at other times it consists of one or two rooms only, and a terrace; while others that are built, as they frequently are, over the porch or gateway, have, if we except the ground floor, which they want, all the conveniences that belong to the house itself. They communicate with the gallery of the house by a door, and by another door, which opens immediately from a privy stair, with the porch or street, without giving the least disturbance to the house. In these back houses, as they may be called, strangers are usually lodged and entertained; and to them likewise the men are wont to retire from the hurry and noise of their families, to be more at leisure for meditation and amusement; and at other times, they are converted into wardrobes and magazines.

This annexed building is in the holy Scriptures

day, is drawn over it, to screen those below from the sun. But, as is well stated in the text, this conjecture is attended with more difficulties than it serves to remove; and, in adopting the obvious sense which the passage points out, we may confirm and illustrate the views so judiciously, and, in the spirit of sound criticism, maintained in the context, by the following observations of Mr Hartley:—'When I lived at Ægina,' says he in his Travels, 'I used to look up not unfrequently at the roof above my head, and contemplate how easily the whole transaction of the paralytic might take place. The roof was made in the following manner:—A layer of reeds, of a large species, was placed upon the rafters; on these a quantity of heather was strewed; on the heather earth was deposited, and beaten down into a solid mass. Now, what difficulty would there be in removing first the earth, next the heather, and then the reeds? Nor would the difficulty be increased, if the earth had a pavement of tiling laid upon it. No inconvenience could result to the persons in the house, from the removal of the tiles and earth; for the heather and reeds would stop any thing that might otherwise fall down, and would be removed last of all.'—*Editor.*

* Forbes's Orient. Mem. vol. iii. p. 268. † Luke xxii. 12.

named *aliah;* and we have reason to believe, that the little chamber which the Shunamite built for the prophet Elisha, whither, as the text informs us, he retired at his pleasure, without breaking in upon the private affairs of the family, or being in his turn interrupted by them in his devotions, was a structure of this kind. It is thus described by the Shunamite herself:—'Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick; and it shall be that when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.'* The internal communication of this chamber with the Shunamite's house, may be inferred, as well from its being built upon the wall which enclosed her dwelling, as from her having so free access to it, and at the second invitation, standing in the door while the prophet announced to her the birth of a son. The summer chamber of Eglon seems to have been a structure of the same kind; whose communication with the street by a private staircase, is clearly ascertained from the unobserved escape of Ehud, after he had revenged Israel of that foreign oppressor:—'And Ehud came unto him (Eglon), and he was sitting in a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone. . . . . Then Ehud went forth through the porch, and shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked them. . . . . And Ehud escaped while they tarried, and passed beyond the quarries, and escaped unto Seirath.'† Such also was the chamber over the gate whither David withdrew, for the greater privacy to weep for Absalom, the door of which opened immediately down into the porch. On that mournful occasion, 'David sat between the two gates; and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate, unto the wall.' When the king received the distressing news of Absalom's death, 'he was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept.'‡ To these may

* 2 Kings iv. 10. † Judg. iii. 20. ‡ 2 Sam. xviii. 24, 33.

be added, the upper chamber, upon whose terrace Ahaz erected his idolatrous altars; and the inner chamber likewise, or as it is better expressed in the original, *a chamber within a chamber*, where the young man anointed Jehu.'* These were all structures of the like nature and contrivance with the *aliahs*, or back houses annexed to the dwellings of the wealthier and more fashionable inhabitants.†

The method of building in the East may assist us in accounting for the particular structure of the temple or house of Dagon, and the great number of people that were buried in its ruins, by pulling down the two principal pillars upon which it rested.‡ About three thousand persons crowded the roof, to behold while the captive champion of Israel made sport to his triumphant and unfeeling enemies. Samson, therefore, must have been in a court or area beneath; and consequently, the temple will be of the same kind with the ancient τεμενη, or sacred enclosures, which were only surrounded, either in part or on all sides, with some plain or cloistered buildings. Several palaces and *dou-wanas*, as the halls of justice are called in these countries, are built in this fashion, in whose courts, wrestlers exhibit for the amusement of the people, on their public festivals and rejoicings; while the roofs of these cloisters are crowded with spectators, that behold their feats of strength and agility. When Dr Shaw was at Algiers, he frequently saw the inhabitants diverted in this manner, upon the roof of the dey's palace; which, like many more of the same quality and denomination, has an advanced cloister *over against the gate of the palace*,§ made in the form of a large pent-house, supported only by one or two contiguous pillars in the front, or else in the centre. In such open structures as these, the great officers of state distribute justice, and transact the public affairs of

* 2 Kings xxiii. 12; and ix. 2.
† Shaw's Trav. vol. i. p 386.
‡ Judg. xvi. 26, 27.
§ Esth. v. 1.

their provinces. Here, likewise, they have their public entertainents, as the lords of the Philistines had in the temple of their god. Supposing, therefore, that in the house of Dagon, was a cloistered building of this kind, the pulling down of the front or centre pillars which supported it, would alone be attended with the catastrophe which happened to the Philistines.*

The extreme heat of the climate obliged the orientals to fall upon various devices to ventilate and cool their apartments. For this purpose, they made their doors, —*i. e.* the doors of the house and the several rooms— not the doors of the court, which, the reader will remember, are always very small—large, and their chambers spacious ; but they soon found that such simple contrivances were insufficient, and that other methods of cooling their habitations were necessary. At Aleppo, this is accomplished by means of kiosks, which are a sort of wooden divans or stages, which project a little way from their other buildings, and hang over the street ; they are raised about a foot and a half higher than the floor of the room, to which they are quite open ; and by having windows in front and on each side, a great draught of air is produced, which makes them cool in the summer, the advantage chiefly intended by their construction. Another method of cooling their apartments is by ventilators.† The houses in Persia are ventilated by means of a triangular building which rises far above the terrace roof, and is open at top ; it receives the wind in whatever direction it blows : in winter the apartments are

* Shaw's Trav. vol. i. p. 392. [The flat roofs, it has been already said, were covered with a layer of earth, spread over and hardened by a stone roller. Upon such a surface, it may be supposed, grass and weeds would grow with difficulty; and those that did appear, would be soon checked and trodden down by the feet. To this circumstance the Psalmist alludes, when, describing the brief prosperity of the wicked, he says, ' Let them be as the grass upon the house-tops, which withereth before it groweth up.']—*Editor.*

† Russel's Hist. of Aleppo, vol. ii. p. 83.

warmed by stoves which are constantly supplied with burning charcoal.*

The summer parlour, or, as Mr Harmer translates it,† the chamber of cooling, in which Eglon the king of Moab was sitting, when Ehud arrived with his present, was refrigerated by some of these contrivances; and it may naturally be supposed that the ventilators, the cupola, and other devices for producing a current of air in their chambers, were first employed in the palaces of kings and princes, and probably introduced at a very remote period. They were certainly known in the time of Eglon, as the name of his apartment, the chamber of cooling, clearly shows.

In the oriental regions, the oppressive heat requires the members of the same family, in general, to occupy each a separate bed. This, according to Maillet, is the custom in Egypt; where, not only the master and the mistress of the family sleep in different beds in the same apartment, but also their female slaves, though several lodge in the same chamber, have each a separate mattress.‡ Yet Solomon seems to intimate that a different custom prevailed in Canaan, and one which the extreme heat of the climate seems positively to forbid:—'If two lie together, then they have heat, but how can one be warm alone?'§ Mr Harmer endeavours to solve the difficulty, by supposing that two might sometimes occupy one bed for medicinal purposes.‖ It is certain that, in the case of David, it was thought a very efficacious method of recalling the vital warmth when it was almost extinguished. But it is probable that the royal preacher alluded rather to the nipping cold of a Syrian winter, when the earth is bound with frost and covered with snow, than to the chilling rigours of extreme old age. The cold in winter is very severe during the night in that country.

* Malcolm's Hist. of Persia, vol. ii. pp. 523, 525.
† Observ. vol i. p. 260.
‡ Lett. ii. p. 124. § Eccl. iv. 11. ‖ Observ. vol. i. p. 270.

Even in the day-time it is so keen, that Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, had a fire burning before him on the hearth, when he cut the scroll in which the prophecies of Jeremiah were written, and committed it to the flames. This accounts in the most satisfactory manner for the remark of Solomon; for nothing surely can be more natural than for two to sleep under the same canopy during the severe cold of a wintry night. The same desire of comfort, one would think, which induces them to separate in the summer, will incline them, at least occasionally, to cherish the vital heat by a nearer approximation than sleeping in the same room. It is usual, through the East, for a whole family to sleep in the same apartment, especially in the lower ranks of life, laying their beds on the ground. To this custom our Lord alludes in the parable:—'He from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not; the door is now shut, and my children are now with me in bed;' that is, my whole family are now a-bed in the same room with me:—'I cannot rise and give thee.'*

The houses in the East were, from the remotest antiquity, lighted with lamps; and hence it is so common in scripture to call every thing which enlightens the body or mind, which guides or refreshes, by the name of a lamp. These lamps were sustained by a large candlestick set upon the ground.† The houses of Egypt, in modern times, are never without lights; they burn lamps all the night long, and in every occupied apartment. So requisite to the comfort of a family is this custom reckoned, or so imperious is the power which it exercises, that the poorest people would rather retrench part of their food than neglect it.‡ If this custom prevailed in Egypt and the adjacent regions of Arabia and Palestine in former times, it will impart a beauty and force to some passages of scripture which have been little observed. Thus, in

* Luke xi. 7. † Fleury's Manners, &c. p. 89.
‡ Maillet, Let. ix. pp. 10, 11.

the language of Jeremiah, to extinguish the light in an apartment, is a convertible phrase for total destruction; and if it was the practice in Judea, as in modern Egypt, which can scarcely be doubted, to keep a lamp continually burning in an occupied apartment, nothing can more properly and emphatically represent the total destruction of a city, than the extinction of the lights. 'I will take from them the light of the candle; and this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment.'* Job describes the destruction of a family among the Arabs, and the desolation of their dwellings, in the very language of the prophet:—'How oft is the candle of the wicked put out, and how oft cometh their destruction upon them.'† Bildad expresses the same idea, in the following beautiful passage:—'Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine. The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him.'‡ A burning lamp is, on the other hand, the chosen symbol of prosperity, a beautiful instance of which occurs in the complaint of Job:—'Oh, that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me, when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light, I walked through darkness.'§ When the ten tribes were taken from Rehoboam, and given to his rival, Jehovah promised to reserve one tribe, and assigns this reason:—'That David my servant may have a light always before me in Jerusalem.'‖

* Jer. xxv. 10, 11. † Job xxi. 17. ‡ Job xviii. 5, 6.
§ Job xxix. 2, 3, 4.
‖ 1 Kings xi. 36. [The universality of this custom among all people who can afford the expense of having a light burning in their rooms during the whole night, is derived from a higher source than that of venerable tradition, to which it is ascribed in the text. It is reckoned one of the most refined comforts the orientals can enjoy. They would make many and great sacrifices to ensure it, and the reason is, that it is an effectual preservative against the intrusion into their chambers during the night of serpents and other noxious reptiles.]—*Editor.*

[The woman of Tekoah made use of the same figurative expression when she came with a well-feigned tale to deceive David into a good-natured sympathy with the distress of her house. In the assumed character of a widow she told the monarch that one of her sons had killed his brother, and that, as the family were demanding his life in compensation for the blood of the relative he had murdered, the death of this only surviving child, were he to be given up to their legal claim, would quench her coal which was left, so that she would have neither husband, nor name, nor remainder upon earth. The word translated *coal* is elsewhere rendered light, and light being frequently used by the sacred writers as synonymous with life, this metaphorical use of it is additional proof of the great value the orientals place on the light given by artificial fire. The lights that are burned in their chambers are almost exclusively composed of vegetable oil; candles are seldom or never used, and the great quantities of sesamum, palma-christi, and the other seeds from which oil is extracted, that are planted, may be easily imagined. Much as the orientals prize a light, when it shines with a clear and steady flame, they entertain a corresponding contempt and abhorrence for a lamp that sends forth a feeble and glimmering ray, or one that has actually gone out. And hence Job, who during his affliction was considered by all as hopelessly and irretrievably ruined, both in health and fortune, and was in fact looked upon as one doomed to die, was bemoaned as a lamp going out, as 'a lamp despised'.*]

The orientals in fitting up their houses, were by no means inattentive to the comfort and satisfaction arising from order and method. Their furniture was scanty and plain; but they were careful to arrange the few household utensils they needed, so as not to encumber the apartments to which they belonged. Their devices

* Job xii. 5.

for this purpose, which, like every part of the structure, bore the character of remarkable simplicity, may not correspond with our ideas of neatness and propriety; but they accorded with the taste, and sufficiently answered the design of the owners. One of these consisted in a set of spikes, nails, or large pegs fixed in the walls of the house, upon which they hung up the moveables and utensils in common use, that belonged to the room. These nails they do not drive into the walls with a hammer or mallet, but fix them there when the house is building; for, if the walls are of brick, they are too hard, or if they consist of clay, too soft and mouldering, to admit the action of the hammer. The spikes, which are so contrived as to strengthen the walls, by binding the parts together, as well as to serve for convenience, are large, with square heads like dice, and bent at the ends so as to make them cramp irons. They commonly place them at the windows and doors, in order to hang upon them, when they choose, veils and curtains, although they place them in other parts of the room, to hang up other things of various kinds.* The care with which they fixed these nails, may be inferred, as well from the important purposes they were meant to serve, as from the promise of the Lord to Eliakim :—'And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place.'† Pins and nails, Dr Russel observes in a manuscript note, are seldom used (at Aleppo) for hanging clothes or other articles upon, which are usually laid one over the other, on a chest, or a particular kind of chair. This intelligent writer does not refuse that they are occasionally used in modern times; and it is evident from the words of the prophet, that it was common in his time to suspend upon them the utensils belonging to the apartment :—'Will men take a pin

* Harmer's Observations, vol. i. p. 290.

† Isaiah xxii. 23. [The words, 'sure place,' says a late traveller of distinguished piety, 'are very expressive, for usually the walls of eastern houses are very far from being secure.'—*Rae Wilson's Travels*, vol. ii. p. 117.]—*Editor.*

of it to hang any vessel thereon?'* The word used in Isaiah for a nail of this sort, is the same which denotes the stake, or large pin of iron, which fastened down to the ground the cords of their tents. These nails, therefore, were of necessary and common use, and of no small importance in all their apartments; and if they seem to us mean and insignificant, it is because they are unknown to us, and inconsistent with our notions of propriety, and because we have no name for them but what conveys to our ear a low and contemptible idea. It is evident from the frequent allusions in Scripture to these instruments, that they were not regarded with contempt or indifference by the natives of Palestine. 'Grace has been showed from the Lord our God,' said Ezra, 'to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place;'† or, as explained in the margin, a constant and sure abode. The dignity and propriety of the metaphor appears from the use which the prophet Zechariah makes of it:—'Out of him came forth the corner, out of him the nail, out of him the battle-bow, out of him every oppressor together.'‡ The whole frame of government, both in church and state, which the chosen people of God enjoyed, was the contrivance of his wisdom and the gift of his bounty; the foundations upon which it rested; the bonds which kept the several parts together; its means of defence; its officers and executors, were all the fruits of distinguishing goodness; even the oppressors of his people were a rod of correction in the hand of Jehovah, to convince them of sin, and restore them to his service.§

Fires in winter are used but for a little while at Aleppo, which is considerably farther to the north than Jerusalem; and some there use none at all.‖ The in-

* Ezekiel xv. 3. † Ezra ix. 8.
‡ Zechariah x. 4.
§ Harmer's Observations, vol. i. p. 290.
‖ Dr Russel's Travels vol. i. pp. 82, 85.

habitants warm their houses in the same way.* The use of charcoal in brasiers, to warm their large apartments, is rather confirmed by the circumstance mentioned in the gospel of John, that the servants and officers of the high priests, when Christ stood before the council, had made a fire of coals (for it was cold), and they warmed themselves; for this, it seems, was a fire of charcoal, not of wood.† Chardin, agreeably to this idea, supposes that the fire which was burning before king Jehoiakim, in which he burnt Jeremiah's roll, was a pan of coals. In this way, persons of quality warm themselves in Persia, and particularly in Media, and wherever wood is easily obtained. The manner in which they sit, will not allow them to be near a chimney; therefore, in those places of the East, they have great brasiers of lighted coal.‡ This, Mr Harmer thinks, is the more probable, that the term *at* which the prophet uses, occurs no where else in the sacred volume denoting a hearth. The Seventy render it εσχαρα, in the Vulgate *arula*, a little altar, a portable grate or brasier. Such contrivances were in use among the ancient Greeks, and are called by Homer Λαμπτηρες in the Odyssey, where he says that Penelope's maids 'threw the embers out of the brasiers upon the floor, and then heaped fresh wood on them, to afford both light and warmth.'

But the words of the prophet are more favourable to the opinion of Dr Russel that it was a hearth, and not a brasier, near which the Jewish monarch was sitting; otherwise the burning of the wood must have filled the house with smoke. Persons of quality at Aleppo,

* Pococke's Travels, vol. i. p. 87.

† Cow dung dried in the sun is generally used as fuel in places where wood is scarce. It is stacked, when dried in cakes, and the fire formed of it throws out a powerful heat, which leaves the people no cause to regret the want of other fuel.—*Brown's Travels.—Editor.*

‡ Chardin's MS. notes, quoted by Harmer, vol. i. p. 341. Malcolm's History of Persia, vol. ii. p. 523.

says the historian, have small winter chambers, which have a chimney and a hearth raised about a foot from the floor; and they even place their charcoal in a pan there to avoid the deleterious effects of its fume in a close place. This mode of sitting is no impediment; the divan, or alcove, is formed in the usual manner.*

The natives of those countries are fond of decorating their habitations with the choicest products of the vegetable kingdom. The quadrangular court in front of their houses is adorned with spreading trees, aromatic shrubs, and fragrant flowers, which are continually refreshed by the crystal waters of a fountain playing in the middle. To increase the beauty of the scene, they cover their stairs, which lead to the upper apartments, with vines, and have often a lattice work of wood raised against the dead walls, upon which climbs a vine or other mantling shrub.† This pleasing custom justifies Doddridge in supposing the occasion of our Lord's comparing himself to a vine, might be his standing near a window, or in some court by the side of the house, where the sight of a vine creeping upon the staircase or the wall, might suggest this beautiful simile. This kind of ornament seems to have been common in Judea, and may be traced to a very remote antiquity. From the familiar manner in which the Psalmist alludes to it, we may suppose it was one of the decorations about the royal palace :—'Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord.'‡ Kimchi, a celebrated Jewish writer, explains the psalm in the same way; and observes that a wife is compared to a vine, because that alone of all trees can be planted in a house. In confirmation of Kimchi's remark, Dr Russel says, 'It is generally

* Harmer's Observations, vol. i. p. 342, Dr Clarke's note.
† Harmer's Observ. vol. i. p. 306, Dr Clarke's note.
‡ Psalm cxxviii. 3.

true, if fruit-bearing trees be intended, as the vine is almost the only fruit-tree which is planted in the houses; pomegranates are another.'

But the orientals were attentive to safety, not less than to convenience and pleasure. To secure their dwellings from the depredations of hostile tribes, that scoured their country in all directions in quest of plunder, they were forced to surround them with lofty walls. This mode of defence seems to have been adopted at a very remote period; for the spies, whom Moses sent into Canaan to view the country, reported that the cities were great, and walled up to heaven. The height of these walls, which, by a bold oriental figure, dictated by the pusillanimous fears of the spies, are said to reach up to heaven, must have appeared to the people of Israel, unaccustomed as they were to warfare of that kind, and totally unprovided with the means necessary for besieging fortified places, a very serious obstacle to the accomplishment of their wishes. But the magnitude of it may be illustrated with the greatest advantage, from the accounts which modern travellers have given us of the present inhabitants of those deserts, who are much in the same circumstances as the people of Israel were when they came out of Egypt, and whose attacks are effectually repelled by the lofty walls of one or two christian monasteries.

The great monastery of mount Sinai, Thevenot says, is well built of good free-stone, with very high smooth walls; on the east side there is a window, by which those that were within drew up the pilgrims into the monastery with a basket, which they let down by a rope that runs by a pulley, to be seen above at the window, and the pilgrims went into it one by one, and so were hoisted up. These walls were so high that they cannot be scaled, and without cannon that place cannot be taken.*

The monastery of St Anthony in Egypt, says Maillet,†

* Thevenot's Trav. part i. pp. 169, 170. † Letter viii. p 321.

is a vast enclosure, with good walls, raised so high as to secure this place from the insults of the Arabs. There is no entrance into it but by a pulley, by means of which people are hoisted up on high, and so conveyed into the monastery. No warlike apparatus which the Arabian freebooters possess, is sufficient for the reduction of these fortified places. The Israelites, not better provided for besieging strongholds, hastily concluded that the walled cities of Canaan, of which they heard such discouraging accounts, must oppose an unsurmountable barrier to their progress.

It is not to be supposed that the descendants of Canaan, like the timid monks of Sinai, walled up their gates on the approach of danger, and permitted none to enter the place, but by means of a pulley; but if their gates had not been well secured, the precaution of raising their walls so high had been in vain. One method of securing the gates of fortified places, among the ancients, was to cover them with thick plates of iron; a custom which is still used in the East, and seems to be of great antiquity. We learn from Pitts, that Algiers has five gates, and some of these have two, some three other gates within them, and some of them plated all over with thick iron.* The place where the apostle was imprisoned, seems to have been secured in the same manner; for, says the inspired historian, 'When they were past the first and second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city, which opened to them of its own accord.'† Pococke, speaking of a bridge not far from Antioch, called the iron bridge, says, there are two towers belonging to it, the gates of which are covered with iron plates, which he supposes is the reason of the name it bears.‡ Some of their gates are plated over with brass; such are the enormous gates of the principal mosque at Damascus, formerly the church of John the Baptist.§ To gates

* Letter viii. p. 10.
† Acts, xii. 10.
‡ Trav. vol. ii. part i. p. 172
§ Maundrell's Journey, p. 126.

like these, the Psalmist probably refers in these words :—'He hath broken the gates of brass ;'* and the prophet, in that remarkable passage, where God promises to go before Cyrus his anointed, and 'break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron.'†

But the locks and keys which secure these iron and brazen doors, by a singular custom, the very reverse of what prevails in the west, are of wood.‡ The bolts of these wooden locks, which are also of wood, are made hollow within, which they unlock with wooden keys, about a span long, and about the thickness of a thumb. Into this key they drive a number of short nails, or strong wires, in such an order and distance, that they exactly fit others within the lock, and so turn them as they please. The locks and keys which shut the doors and gates in countries adjacent to Syria, are fabricated of the same materials, and in the same form.§ But those cities which were fortified with more than ordinary care, had sometimes bars of brass or iron. In describing the superior and almost impregnable strength of Babylon, which Cyrus was chosen by the Almighty to subdue, the prophet particularly mentions the gates of brass and bars of iron. According to this view, the emphasis of the following passage is much greater perhaps than is commonly apprehended :—'A brother offended, is harder to be won than a strong city ; and their contentions are like the bars of a castle,' || that are extremely difficult to be removed, both on account of their size, and of the strong and durable materials of which they are made.

In the capital of Egypt, also, all their locks and keys are of wood ; they have none of iron, not even for their city gates, which may with ease be opened without a key. The keys or bits of timber, with little pieces of wire, lift up other pieces of wire that are in the lock,

* Psalm cvii. 16.
† Isaiah xlv. 2.
‡ Russel's Hist. vol. i. pp. 21, 22.
§ Thevenot, vol. ii. part i. p. 134.
|| Prov. xviii. 19.

and enter into certain little holes, out of which the ends of the wires that are in the key have just expelled the corresponding wires; upon which the gate is opened. But to accomplish this, a key is not necessary: the Egyptian lock is so imperfectly made, that one may without difficulty open it with his finger, armed with a little soft paste. The locks in Canaan, at one time, do not seem to have been made with greater art, if Solomon allude to the ease with which they were frequently opened without a key:—'My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him.'*

But, conscious that all these precautions were insufficient for their security, the orientals employed watchmen to patrol the city during the night, to suppress any disorders in the streets, or to guard the walls against the attempts of a foreign enemy. To this custom Solomon refers in these words:—'The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the wall took away my vail from me.'† This custom may be traced to a very remote antiquity; so early as the departure of Israel from the land of Egypt, the morning watch is mentioned, certainly indicating the time when the watchmen were commonly relieved. In Persia, the watchmen were obliged to indemnify those who were robbed in the streets, and make satisfaction with their own blood, for those who were murdered; which accounts for the vigilance and severity which they display in the discharge of their office, and illustrates the character of watchmen given to Ezekiel, who lived in that country, and the duties he was required to perform. If the wicked perished in his iniquities without warning, the prophet was to be accountable for his blood; but if he duly pointed out his danger, he delivered his own soul.‡ These terms, therefore, were neither harsh nor severe; they were the common appointments of

* Song v. 4. † Song v. 7. ‡ Ezekiel xxxiii. 5.

watchmen in Persia.* They were also charged to announce the progress of the night to the slumbering city :—'The burden of Dumah ; he calls to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night.'† This is confirmed by an observation of Chardin, upon these words of Moses :—'For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night ;' that as the people of the East have no clocks, the several parts of the day and of the night, which are eight in all, are announced. In the Indies, the parts of the night are made known, as well by instruments of music, in great cities, as by the rounds of the watchmen, who, with cries and small drums, give them notice that a fourth part of the night is past. Now, as these cries awaked those who had slept all that quarter part of the night, it appeared to them but as a moment. There are sixty of these people in the Indies by day, and as many by night ; that is, fifteen for each division.

It is evident the ancient Jews knew, by means of some public notice, how the night watches passed away; but whether the men simply announced the termination of the watch, or made use of trumpets, or other sonorous instruments, in making the proclamation, it may not be easy to determine ; and still less what kind of chronometers the watchmen used. The probability is, that the watches were announced with the sound of a trumpet ; for the prophet Ezekiel makes it a part of the watchmen's duty, at least in time of war, to blow the trumpet, and warn the people.‡

[They were required not only at each watch of the night, but at frequent intervals in the progress of it, to cry aloud, in order to give the people, who depend upon them for the protection of their lives and pro-

* Taylor's Calmet, vol. iii. † Isaiah xxi. 11.
‡ Ezekiel xxxiii. 3. Harmer's Observ. vol. i. p. 333.

perty, assurance that they are not sleeping at their posts, or negligent of their charge. On these latter occasions, the exclamations are made in the form of addresses to their comrades, and generally consist of some expressions in the form of a dialogue tending to enliven one another in the discharge of their solitary and monotonous task; some watchword, or set form of words, similar to what a traveller informs us is used by the watchmen of the caravans in the desert, who, in going these rounds, exclaim when they meet, 'God is merciful,' while the other responds in the same elevated tone, 'blessings be on you, or attend yourselves.' This custom of the watchmen crying aloud in the course of the watches, and that, too, by saluting each other when they met in the form of a set dialogue, was observed also by the ancient officers of this description among the Jews, the watchword being then, as we have seen it is still among the watchmen of the caravans, some pious sentiment, in which the name of Jehovah was specially expressed. Two remarkable instances of this occur in Scripture. The one is in the prophecies of Isaiah, where, speaking of the watchmen of the temple, who were always Levites, and among whom the same regulations subsisted as among other watchmen, he addresses them under the poetical description of 'Ye that make mention of the Lord,' *i. e.* Ye whose watchword is the name of Jehovah.* The other instance is in Psalm cxxxiv., the whole of which, as is justly observed by bishop Lowth, is nothing more than the alternate cry of two different divisions of the watch. The first watch addresses the second, reminding them of their duty; the second answers by a solemn blessing. The address and the answer seem both to be a set form, which each proclaimed aloud at stated intervals to notify the time of night:—

[First band of watchmen—'Bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, who by night stand in the house

* Isaiah lxii. 6.

of the Lord. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and bless the Lord.'

[Second band of watchmen answer—'The Lord bless thee out of Zion, the Lord that made heaven and earth.']

The watchman, in a time of danger, seems to have taken his station in a tower, which was built over the gate of the city. We may form a tolerably distinct idea of the ancient towers in Palestine, from the description which the sacred historian gives us of one, in the entrance of Mahanaim :—'And David sat between the two gates: and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold a man running alone. The watchman cried and told the king; and the king said, If he be alone, there is tidings in his mouth. And the watchman saw another man running; and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold, another man running alone; and the king said, He also bringeth tidings.'* When the tidings were announced, the historian observes, 'the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept.' It is afterwards added,—'Then the king arose and sat in the gate; and they told unto all the people saying, behold the king doth sit in the gate; and all the people came before the king; for Israel had fled every man to his tent.'

From this description, it appears that the tower in the entrance of Mahanaim had two pair of gates, at some distance from each other; in a small room, which was often found by the side of these fortified gates, the door of which opened into the passage between them, sat the king, waiting in fearful suspense the issue of the contest; for it cannot be supposed he sat in the passage itself, which had been at once unbecoming his dignity, and incommodious to the passengers entering or leaving the city. We find a watchman stationed on

* 2 Samuel xviii. 24; and xix. 8.

the top of this tower, to which he went up by a staircase from the passage, which, like the roof of their dwelling-houses, was flat, for the purpose of descrying at a distance those that were approaching the place, or repelling the attacks of an enemy. The observations made by the watchman were not communicated by him immediately to the king, but by the intervention of a warder at the outer gate of the tower; and it appears that a private staircase led from the lower room, in which the king was sitting, to the upper room over the gateway; for by that communication he retired to give full vent to his sorrow. The only circumstance involved in any doubt, is in what part of this building he sat (for it is evident he continued in some part of the gate), when he returned his thanks to the army, for their exertions in his favour; or, in the language of the historian, 'spake to the hearts of his servants,' and received their congratulations. It is somewhat uncertain whether he gave audience to his people in the upper room, where he lamented, in strains so affecting, the death of Absalom, or in the little chamber between the two gates, where he waited the arrival of the messengers, or in some other part of the building. The ancient custom of sitting in the gate on solemn occasions, rather favours the opinion that David went down from the apartment above the gate, to the chamber in the side of the passage. This custom, which may be traced to the remotest antiquity, is still observed in the East; for when Pococke returned from viewing the town of ancient Byblus, the sheich and the elders were sitting in the gate of the city, after the manner of their ancestors.*

The fortified cities in Canaan, as in some other coun-

* Harmer's Observ. vol. i. p. 352, *et seq.* [The gate of Jaffa on the land side is remarkably handsome, and beside it stands a noble Turkish fountain, formed of various coloured marbles, pouring forth the purest water. It furnishes a good specimen of the gate of an eastern town, having within it the seat of judgment as well as the receipt of custom.—*Wilde's Travels.*]—*Editor.*

tries, were commonly strengthened with a citadel, to which the inhabitants fled when they found it impossible to defend the place. The whole inhabitants of Thebes, unable to resist the repeated and furious assaults of Abimelech, retired into one of these towers, and bid defiance to his rage :—'But there was a strong tower within the city, and thither fled all the men and women, and all they of the city, and shut it to them, and gat them up to the top of the tower.' The extraordinary strength of this tower, and the various means of defence which were accumulated within its narrow walls, may be inferred from the violence of Abimelech's attack, and its fatal issue :—'And Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought against it, and went hard unto the door of the tower, to burn it with fire. And a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech's head, and all to break his skull.'* The city of Shechem had a tower of the same kind, into which the people retired when the same usurper took it and sowed it with salt.† These strong towers which were built within a fortified city, were commonly placed on an eminence, to which they ascended by a flight of steps. Such was the situation of the city of David, a strong tower, upon a high eminence at Jerusalem ; and the manner of entrance, as described by the sacred writer :—'But the gate of the fountain repaired Shallum, unto the stairs that go down from the city of David.'‡ It is extremely probable, that Ramoth-Gilead, a frontier town belonging to the ten tribes, and in the time of Jehu, in their possession, was strengthened by one of these inner towers, built on an eminence, with an approach of this nature. If this conjecture be well founded, it throws light upon a very obscure passage, where the manner in which Jehu was proclaimed king of Israel, is described.§ His associates were no sooner informed that the prophet had anointed him king over the ten tribes, than 'they hasted

* Judg. ix. 51. † Ib. 45. ‡ Neh. iii. 15. § 2 Kings ix.

and took every man his garment, and put it under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king.' Hence, the stairs were not those within the tower, by which they ascended to the top, but those by which they ascended the hill, or rising ground on which the tower stood; the top of the stair will then mean the landing place in the area before the door of the tower, and by consequence the most public place in the whole city. As it was the custom of those days to inaugurate and proclaim their kings in the most public places, no spot can be imagined more proper for such a ceremony, than the top of the steps, that is, the most elevated part of the hill, upon which stood the castle of Ramoth-Gilead, in the court of which, numbers of people might be assembled, waiting the result of a council of war which was sitting at the time, deliberating on the best method of defending the city against the Syrians, in the absence of their sovereign.

Some of these towers, or citadels, were connected with idolatry, having a temple within them, or some apartment devoted to the worship of heathen gods; or, perhaps the whole structure was committed to the patronage and protection of the tutelar deity of the place; or, it might be used as a safe depository, where they laid up the votive offerings made to the idol. The stronghold in the tower of Shechem certainly had some relation to Baal Berith; for it is stated by the historian, 'When all the men of the tower of Shechem heard that (the city was taken) they entered into an hold of the house of the god Berith.'*

In the writings of Jeremiah and Amos, a distinction is made between winter and summer houses. Russel thinks they may refer to different apartments in the same house;† but if the customs of Barbary resemble those of Palestine in this respect, it is better to under-

* Harmer's Observations, vol. i. p. 359, *et seq.*

† Harmer's Observations, vol. i. p. 364. Dr Russel's MS. note.

stand them of different houses. The hills and valleys round about Algiers, according to Dr Shaw, are all over beautified with gardens and country seats, whither the inhabitants of better fashion retire during the heat of the summer season. They are little white houses, shaded with a variety of fruitful trees, and evergreens, which, besides the shade and retirement, afford a gay and delightful prospect toward the sea. The gardens are all of them well stocked with melons, fruit and pot herbs of all kinds; and (what is chiefly regarded in these hot climates) each of them enjoys a great command of water.* In Persia most of the summer houses are slightly constructed and divided into three pavilions at a considerable distance from each other, with canals, fountains and flower gardens in the intermediate spaces: while the winter houses, or palaces in cities, are built of strong masonry, and ornamented at great expense; and palaces, villas, and mosques are often named after their principal embellishments: Thus at Barocke and Ahmedabad are the ivory and silver mosques.† This account furnishes an easy exposition of a passage in the prophecies of Amos:—'I will smite the winter house,' the palaces of the great in fortified towns, 'with the summer house,' the small houses of pleasure, used in the summer, to which any foe can have access; 'and the houses of ivory shall perish; and the great houses shall have an end, saith the Lord,'‡ those that are distinguished by their amplitude and richness, built as they are in their strongest places, yet all of them shall perish like their country seats, by the irresistible stroke of almighty power.

To mitigate the burning rays of a vertical sun, the orientals endeavour to shade their dwellings with the branches and foliage of a spreading tree. When Sir Thomas Roe went ambassador to Delhi, he found the

* Shaw's Travels, vol. i. pp. 86, 87.
† Forbes's Oriental Memoirs, vol. iii. p. 164.
‡ Amos iii. 15.

dwellings of the inhabitants encircled with tall trees, under whose broad and deep shadow, they enjoyed a degree of coolness unknown to those in more exposed situations. In some places, their cities had the appearance of being situated in the midst of a forest, whose irregular plantations, reared by the hand of nature, seemed to retain almost all their native wildness. The houses in Egypt are sheltered in the same manner ; every village is shaded by a small wood of palm trees ; and in Barbary, the country seats are screened from the sun by a variety of fruitful trees and evergreens.* From several hints in Scripture it appears, that the same custom of pitching their tents, or building their houses under the shade of a tree, prevailed in Palestine from the earliest times. Deborah the prophetess had her dwelling under the palm tree, between Ramah and Bethel ; and Jericho was called the city of palm trees, because it was encircled with extensive plantations of that species ; while perhaps every vacant spot within the walls, as in many cities of Hindostan, was crowded, and every street and alley lined, with that beautiful and valuable tree.† But the frequent use of the expression, to dwell every man under his vine and under his fig tree, seems to intimate, that these species of trees were most commonly preferred by the people of Israel, for shading their dwellings. We may discover, perhaps, a reason for this preference, in the peculiar circumstances of that people. The whole surface of Canaan, which was not very extensive, was, by the command of God, surveyed and divided into small

* See De Tott's Memoir, part iv. p. 63.

† 'One hour after passing Esdraelon, we descended near the small village of Deborah, where she who judged Israel is reported to have dispensed her decrees. The village is situated at the foot of Mount Tabor; and the little stream that flows at no great distance from it is called the Lower Kishon, and is in fact the northern branch of that river, near to which Deborah and Barak defeated Sisera. The village consists of a few huts of mud, and there are a great variety of trees and shrubs about it, which give the place a rich green appearance.—*V. Monro*, vol. i. p. 295.—*Editor.*

inheritances, the produce of which could do little more than furnish to each family a frugal supply of necessaries. It therefore became an object of great importance, to multiply and increase the means of subsistence as much as possible; to suffer no ground to lie waste, but to make every corner put forth to the utmost its productive powers. For this reason, the chosen people, formed, by that wise and gracious arrangement, to permanent habits of frugality and diligence, raised their habitations under the shade of the palm tree, or, when the nature of the soil was more favourable to the cultivation of the vine and the fig, beneath their covert, where they found at once a delightful shelter and a delicious repast.

[Among other proofs of the extraordinary respect and profound veneration which orientals are taught to cherish for their sovereign, not the least striking is the custom of having a gate exclusively appropriated for the use of royalty. The gate of a city through which the monarch has entered, is never allowed to be afterwards profaned by vulgar feet; and, in like manner, when any of the courtiers has completed the erection of a new palace, provision is always made that, besides the small entrance door, which we have already described, as common to all eastern houses, the mansion shall have one spacious gate, on which the most elaborate care is bestowed, and which is splendidly adorned with all manner of carved work, for the admission of the king, when he comes, according to immemorial usage, to enjoy the first festivities of the house. By that magnificent entrance, none but the person of royalty is admitted; and, on the day that the series of entertainments terminates, and the sovereign takes leave of his gratified host, the gate is closed up, never again to be opened, unless a similar honour be reserved for the proprietor on some future occasion. 'At Bagdad, the gate Al Talism,' says Sir Robert Ker Porter, 'is now bricked up in honour of its having

been entered in triumph by the Sultan Murad after his having recovered Bagdad from the Persians, and the weak grasp of the unworthy son of the great Abbas. In consequence of this signal event, the portal was instantly closed on the victor having marched through, and from that day it has never been opened. This custom of shutting up any passage that has been peculiarly honoured by the feet of majesty, appears to have prevailed generally over the East. I found another instance of it at Ispahan, where the Ali Copi gate is, in like manner, held sacred, for a similar reason.' Caron, in his account of Japan, states, that whenever any of the chief nobility builds a new house, he causes an entrance to be made for common use, and also another which is more elegant, and richly gilt from top to bottom. This is covered over with planks in order that it may not be damaged either by the rain or the sun; and it remains in this state till the emperor goes to feast in the new palace. As soon as he has passed in and out of it, it is again shut and covered up. Nor is it either opened or uncovered again, except upon a like occasion, because no one may enjoy the honour of treading on the same threshold with the emperor, whilst at the the same time it would be considered as derogatory to his majesty to pass over one that had been worn. The command is issued, and sometimes a public intimation is made on the walls to this effect:—'This gate shall be kept shut. It is for the prince.' It is manifestly to this custom that Ezekiel, who was acquainted with the manners of Persia, alludes in that passage of his writings:—'The Lord said unto me, This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the Lord, the God of Israel hath entered by it, therefore it shall be shut. It is for the prince.'* While their respect for royalty rendered it necessary for the nobles and grandees to have a gate for royalty, conspicuous for its spaciousness and

* Ezek. xliv. 2, 3.

splendour, it might be supposed that the palace itself would be distinguished by entrance gates of magnificence and elevation corresponding to the grandeur of the royal residence. And hovering about the avenues of such an edifice there are in eastern as well as in other countries, always to be seen groups of people, some of whom are attracted to the spot by the impulse of curiosity, others by the hope of obtaining some mark of the royal favour. The assiduity and perseverance requisite for succeeding in their suit, and waiting for the propitious moment of presenting themselves in the presence of the sovereign, is not, as may be easily supposed, at all times consistent with personal ease and convenience, and, accordingly, here and there may be observed solitary individuals, seated upon a stone, or reclining upon the grass, in anxious expectation for the appearance of the sovereign on his way to his daily exercise. To sit, then, at the gates of a king is a custom of great antiquity, and obtains to this day in Persia, where more than any other country the spirit of orientalism exhibits all its freshness and peculiarities. There the practice is said to have been introduced by the elder Cyrus, and from his example to have continued during the existence of the Persian empire. Traces of it, however, are to be found also in other countries of the East; and it is to this, which seems to have prevailed in Palestine in the days of the wise king of Israel, that allusion is made in that passage where the man that heareth the sayings of wisdom is described as 'watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.'*

* Proverbs viii. 34. In time of peace soldiers, having no other employment, are distributed among the different palaces of the sovereign, and military towers of the country, and their arms are hung up in tasteful order on the walls and gates. To this day, we are told, that one of the gates of the imperial seraglio at Constantinople is adorned with a profusion of shields and cimeters. Of this practice of depositing the arms of soldiers at the gates of a king, an ancient example occurs in the prophecies of Ezekiel, who says,

[Before the gates of temples and buildings of every kind, consecrated to a sacred purpose, there was anciently a wide enclosure, within which the people worshipped, and which looked towards the entrance of the edifice. This was the Hieron at the gates of holy places,—a part of the area or court of the building that was considered sacred, not only because it was the place where the people stood to worship, but also because religious rites were frequently performed there; and hence we find frequent allusions in scripture to the peculiar sanctity with which the gates or entrances of those venerable buildings were regarded, and to the homage which was offered there. Thus Ezekiel says, the people of the land shall worship at the door of the gate before the Lord in the Sabbaths, and in the new moons;* and in the beautiful song of the sons of Korah, the gates of the sanctuary at Jerusalem are represented as of greater value and interest in the sight of God, than all the dwellings of Jacob.† The knowledge of the peculiar sanctity that was attached to the entrance of a temple, explains the reason of the threshold being chosen for the demolition of Dagon's image. The temporary triumph which the Philistines had gained over the forces of Israel, signalized by the capture of the ark and sacred symbols of its worship, had intoxicated that idolatrous people, and led them in the fulness of their enthusiastic rejoicing, to proclaim a festival of thanksgiving to their national deity, to whose aid they ascribed the success of their arms. It was meet, therefore, upon an occasion when the true God, to punish his people for their apostacy, and convince them of their sins, had allowed the ensigns of his presence to fall dishonoured into the hands of the enemy, to vindicate his supremacy, and exhibit a striking proof of his living irresistible power; and no

'The men of Arvad with thine army were upon thy walls round about, and the Gammadims were in thy towers: they hanged their shields upon thy walls round about,' xxvii. 11.—*Editor.*

* Ezek. xlvi. 3. † Psalm lxxxvii. 2.

evidence more memorable could have been given of the vanity of his idol antagonist, than that in the august presence of Israel's God, the statue of Dagon was overthrown and dismembered on the *threshold* of his temple, the very spot which, in the estimation of his votaries, his rites had invested with more than ordinary sacredness.

[The gate of a city was a place of public resort where a great deal of important business was transacted; and hence, in allusion to the multitudes of people who were always at certain hours congregated there, it is sometimes used metaphorically for the inhabitants of the town. Thus, Boaz said to Ruth, all the gate of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.* A very erroneous idea, however, will be formed of the gate when used in this figurative sense, if the reader understand it as meaning a large door of wood or iron bars fixed by hinges to the walls of a city. To comprehend the exact import of this very common oriental term, it is necessary to know that, at the entrance of every town, there is a roofed building, unenclosed by walls, where, to use the words of Mr Roberts, 'travellers remain, and where people meet to hear the news of the day, and talk over the affairs of the place.' Its situation at the entrance of the town is the most convenient, for, as numbers of the citizens, who are engaged in agriculture are constantly passing and repassing every morning, and others prefer lodging in hot weather in the outskirts, as being cooler than the close and confined streets, it is found to be most suitable and easy of access to those who have any business to transact; and, accordingly, from the most ancient times, it has been the chosen place, where governors and elders sat to hear complaints or to dispense justice, to make conveyance of titles and estates, to hold markets, and perform all the offices connected with the general interests of the city. Either within this extensive building, or in tents erected around it, a market is held where all

* Ruth iii. 11.

sorts of goods are exposed to sale. 'In our rides,' says Mr Morier, 'we usually went out of the town at the gate leading to the village of Shah Abdul, where a market was held every morning, particularly of horses, mules, asses, and camels. About sunrise, the owners of the animals assemble and exhibit them for sale.' But besides, here were sellers of all sorts of goods in temporary shops and tents: and, in ancient times also, we find that markets were held in the gates of the city, as appears from this memorable passage:—'To-morrow shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel in the gate of Samaria.'* In this place all bargains were made, and contracts entered into. When Abraham bought a field from the sons of Heth, the sale was made at the gate of the city; and likewise the interesting transaction that involved the fortunes of the amiable Ruth:—'Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there; and behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by, unto whom he said, Ho, such a one, turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down. And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi. And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders said, We are witnesses.'† In this place also, the seat of judgment is erected. 'Hearing,' says Mr Campbell, 'that a cause was going to be brought before the king, in which I was interested, and being anxious to witness the proceedings, I was led in haste to the gate, where I saw the king sit down at the right side of it, with his secretary on his right hand, and the prosecutor or complainer on his left, who stated his case across to the secretary, and the king afterwards gave his decision.' To this practice of

* 2 Kings vii. 1. † Ruth iv.

administering judgment in the gates, there are very many allusions in the Scriptures; and the knowledge of the antiquity and general prevalence of the custom will serve to explain several modes of expression not easily understood otherwise. When David had recovered from his intense grief at the death of his unprincipled son Absalom, we are told, then the king arose and sat in the gate, and they told all the people, saying, behold the king doth sit in the gate, and all the people came before the king.* A statute of the Mosaic law provides, that if a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him and bring him unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place.† The Psalmist says, they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate;‡ that is, plead against an adversary before the judge. Job speaks of some who were crushed in the gate;§ that is, who lose their cause and are condemned in court; and Jeremiah, describing the desolation of Jerusalem, says, elders have ceased from the gate, that is, justice is no longer administered;‖ and so also, many other phrases of a similar kind, such as to open one's mouth in the gate, to turn aside judgment in the gate.

[The grounds around the outside of the walls of many eastern cities, as was anciently the case with the larger towns of the Jews, are infested with a motley crowd of gipsies, and people of that vagrant description who are not allowed the privilege of entering into the interior of the city. While the streets present the spectacle of order, quietness, and regularity, the outskirts are filled with encampments of strolling beggars, and others of a lower and more degraded cast,—those who gain their livelihood by fortune-telling, debauchery, and every species of vice. This striking difference

* 2 Samuel xix. 8. † Deuteronomy xxi. 18, 19.
‡ Psalm cxxvii. 5. § Job v. 4. ‖ Lamentations v. 14.

between the tranquillity and order that prevail within, and the strange disorderly characters to be found in the environs of, eastern cities, has been made by John* the groundwork of a beautiful and impressive description of the glories of the millennial church, when all those who are corrupt in principle and practice shall be excluded, and none remain, but such as are pure in the faith, and walk worthy of their holy vocation. 'As we wound round the rampart, to reach the camp, we passed a number of huts, occupied by "the chumans" (leather dressers), and other Hindoos of low grade, who follow professions regarded as unclean by the majority of their countrymen, and are, therefore, not admitted into any of their towns. Leprous persons lie under the same exclusion, and many gipsies are usually found among this mingled and refuse population, which is generally as immoral as it is degraded and unfortunate. The suburbs of the ancient cities of the Jews seem to have been almost similarly inhabited, and I was forcibly struck to-day (as I rode through the huts of which I have spoken, and saw the filthy swine, the dogs gnawing the carcasses of different animals, and the flaunting dress and unequivocal air of the miserable, ragged, and dirty females), with that passage in the Revelations, which, though figuratively applied to the pure discipline of the christian church in its state of glory, is obviously taken from the police of a well regulated earthly city in that age and country:—"There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth;" "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolators, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."'†

[A still greater nuisance than even the multitude of such low and disreputable characters that infest the suburbs of eastern cities, is found in the dogs that prowl about everywhere. It is scarcely possible for an European to form an idea of the intolerable nuisance occa-

* Rev. xxii. 15. † Heber's Narrative of a Journey, vol. i. p. 605.

sioned in the villages and cities of the East, by the multitude of dogs that infest the streets. The natives, accustomed from their earliest years to the annoyance, come to be regardless of it; but to a stranger, these creatures are the greatest plague to which he is subjected; for, as they are never allowed to enter a house, and do not constitute the property of any particular owner, they display none of those habits of which the domesticated species among us are found susceptible, and are destitute of all those social qualities which often render the dog the trusty and attached friend of man,—the lively companion, the faithful guardian, and the favourite on every hearth. Instead of the gentle, attractive, and almost rational creature he appears to be among us, the race seems wholly to degenerate in the warm regions of the East, and to approximate to the character of beasts of prey, as in disposition they are ferocious, cunning, blood-thirsty, and possessed of the most insatiable voracity: and even in their very form there is something repulsive; their sharp and savage features; their wolf-like eyes; their long hanging ears; their straight and pointed tails; their lank and emaciated forms, almost entirely without a belly, give them an appearance of wretchedness and degradation, that stands in sad contrast with the general condition and qualities of the breed in Europe. They are almost wholly outcasts from human habitations; and, consequently, in Asiatic countries, the beautiful traits of canine fidelity and attachment are altogether unknown. There the hand of man is seldom extended to offer the stroke, or the morsel of kindness; and the creature that receives or snatches it from the unwilling hand, would, in a few hours after, if an opportunity offered, mangle and devour the corpse of his benefactor without the smallest repugnance. These hideous creatures, dreaded by the people for their ferocity, or avoided by them as useless and unclean, are obliged to prowl about everywhere in search of a precarious subsistence; and,

as they have never been subjected to any discipline, and run generally in bands, their natural ferocity, inflamed by hunger, and the consciousness of strength, makes them the most troublesome and dangerous visitors to the stranger who unexpectedly finds himself in their neighbourhood, as they will not scruple to seize whatever he may have about him, and even, in the event of his falling, and being otherwise defenceless, to attack and devour him. It is chiefly, however, at night, that these prowlers are the most formidable; for even those, which lie during the heat of the day, lazy, inactive, and scarcely raising their head to growl at the passenger who may have chanced to trample on them, run about, whenever the shades begin to fall, and the inhabitants to disappear from the streets, and are so intolerable by their perpetual din, and their sudden and furious attacks, that it is an attempt never made without the greatest risk, to walk abroad at night, and without sufficient protection. This circumstance, which is frequently noticed by travellers in the East, may be illustrated by an incident described in a very lively manner by the French traveller Denon. It occurred on the day of his entry into Alexandria, when that city was stormed by the French in the late war, and having omitted to take with him some necessary articles of clothing, he had gone for that purpose to his ship, and was returning considerably later than he had anticipated to the city, which he found totally deserted; the stillness of midnight prevailing, and not a glimmer of light, but what was afforded by the stars and clear atmosphere of the climate. He had not proceeded far, when he was met by a troop of furious dogs, who attacked him from the streets, the doors and the low roofs of the houses, with so much ferocity, as almost to deprive him of the power of self-defence. No sooner had he passed the territory of these, than he was received by a fresh band of assailants, till at length, molested and wearied almost to death, he thought of

taking a circuitous route along the suburbs of the city, by which, after climbing over walls, and wading a considerable depth into the river, he came, after the greatest fatigue, about midnight to one of the French sentinels, convinced that dogs are one of the greatest pests of an oriental city. Chateaubriand, speaking of Galata, near Constantinople, says, that 'the almost total want of women, the want of wheel-carriages, and the multitude of dogs without masters, were the three distinguishing features of the city;' and Le Bruyn, describing another eastern city, says, 'great numbers of dogs crowd the streets; they do not belong to any one, but either get their food as they can, or are supported by the charitable, who give money to bakers and butchers to feed them, and even leave legacies for that purpose.' In ancient times, they seem to have been no less a nuisance than they are to the modern cities of the East; for we find the sacred writers making several allusions to the particulars now mentioned regarding the character and condition of dogs in terms so graphic, and so like what an observer of the present day might use, as to convey the impression, that the ancient inhabitants of Palestine witnessed the same spectacles, and were subjected to the same molestations, as are found still to exist in all the towns and villages throughout the East. Thus, the Psalmist (Psalm lix. 14, 15), 'at evening they return, and make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city; they wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied.' In the 22d Psalm, in which he gives a prophetical description of the sufferings of Messiah, he uses these expressions:—'dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me:'—aptly representing, under the image of a band of ferocious dogs attacking a defenceless passenger, the proceedings of the insolent and infuriated multitude who insisted for the crucifixion of Jesus. To the same features in the character of eastern dogs, allusion is made in the

following passage from Isaiah :—'The watchmen of Israel are blind ; they are ignorant ; they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber ; yea, they are greedy dogs, which can never have enough.' Under this figurative language, the prophet described the indolence, unfitness, and rapacity of the prophets and teachers of his corrupt age ; the application of his bold metaphors may easily be made by help of the statements, already given, of the disposition and habits of the dog in eastern cities ; but he has included one additional circumstance that remains to be noticed to complete the description of the oriental breed. He calls them 'dumb dogs ; they cannot bark ;' and this, too, is in exact accordance with what is found to be the case still ; for travellers, who have attended to this point, inform us, that the canine species degenerate so much in hot countries, that, in a short time, they lose their voice and cannot bark, so that they either make a hideous melancholy howl, or, as in some places, become altogether dumb. These animals, driven by hunger, greedily devour every thing that comes in their way ; they glut themselves with the most putrid and loathsome substances that are thrown about the cities, and of nothing are they so fond as of human flesh ; a repast, with which the barbarity of the despotic countries of Asia too frequently supplies them, as the bodies of criminals slain there for murder, treason, or violence, are seldom buried, and lie exposed till the mangled fragments are carried off by the dogs. Many travellers in the East mention their having met with such disgusting spectacles ; and Bruce, in particular, describes the streets of Gondar, the capital of Abyssinia, as strewed with pieces of carcases, and that he was rendered miserable at seeing his own hungry dogs, twice let loose through the carelessness of his servants, and bringing off the heads and arms of slaughtered men into the court-yard, to eat them at leisure. With these cir-

cumstances in our knowledge, we cannot be surprised at those parts of the Sacred History, which describe the readiness of the dogs to lick up the blood of the much injured Naboth ; or at the wretched fate of the royal accomplices in this murder ; with one of whom, the atrocious Jezebel, the dogs had been so busy, that, when the messenger came to bury her corpse, 'they found no more of her than the skull and the feet, and the palms of her hands.'* And we are enabled to judge also of the severity of the divine judgment upon the guilty and impenitent nations of old, when the Almighty threatened to visit them, among other terrible scourges, with multitudes of furious and ravenous dogs :—'I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the Lord ; the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and destroy.'†]

* 'As I was repairing to the native village of Bustom to survey a bridge which was thrown across the road, on my route from the station of Jellasore, on crossing the Soubunreeka River, my attention was attracted to a number of human skeletons, which lay scattered in various directions upon the white sands adjacent to the course of the stream. Upon inquiry I learned that these unfortunate relics were the remains of pilgrims, who were on their road to the great pagoda of Juggernaut, and had been drowned two evenings before by means of a ferry-boat sinking with them during a violent north-wester. On my approaching several of these sad vestiges of mortality, I perceived that the flesh had been completely devoured from the bones by Pariah dogs, vultures, and other obscene animals. The only portion of the several corpses I noticed that remained entire and untouched, were the bottoms of the feet and the insides of the hands, and this extraordinary circumstance immediately brought to my mind that remarkable passage recorded in the 1st book of Kings, relating to the death and ultimate fate of Jezebel, who was, as to her body, eaten of dogs, and nothing remained of her but the "palms of her hands and the soles of her feet." The former narrative may afford a corroborative proof of the rooted antipathy that the dog has to prey upon the human hands and feet. Why such should be the case remains a mystery.'—*Oriental Herald, March* 1841—*Editor.*

† Jer. xv. 3. In a more settled and advanced state of eastern society, more attention is paid to the domestication of the dog, and the owners show him acts of kindness. Thus, in the gospel history, we read of the dogs being fed with the crumbs that fell from their master's

table; a circumstance which, while it indicates a higher status as occupied by the dog at that period, is probably to be accounted for by the custom of the ancients not using a linen cover for their tables; but merely rubbing them with a wet sponge, and after eating, cleansing their hands with the soft parts of the bread, instead of a towel; so that the crumbs used for this purpose, or dropped by the guests on the table, were reserved as the portion of the dogs. Perhaps, too, the graphic circumstance introduced into the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, of the dogs licking the sores of the beggar, is to be interpreted rather of the private and well-fed pack of Dives, than of a ravenous band, whom the feeble arm of the aged and diseased mendicant would have been ill able to keep at bay.—*Editor.*

CHAPTER IV.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE FROM THE DRESS OF THE ORIENTALS.

The dress of oriental nations, to which the inspired writers often allude, has undergone almost no change from the earliest times. Their stuffs were fabricated of various materials; but wool was generally used in their finer fabrics; and the hair of goats, camels, and even of horses, was manufactured for coarser purposes, especially for sackcloth, which they wore in time of mourning and distress. Sackcloth of black goat's hair was manufactured for mournings; the colour and the coarseness of which, being reckoned more suitable to the circumstances of the wearer, than the finer and more valuable texture which the hair of white goats supplied. This is the reason that a clouded sky is represented in the bold figurative language of Scripture, as covered with sackcloth and blackness, the colour and dress of persons in affliction. In Egypt and Syria, they wore also fine linen, cotton, and byssus, probably fine muslin from India,—in Hebrew *bouts*, the finest cloth known to the ancients. In Canaan, persons of distinction were dressed in fine linen of Egypt; and, according to some authors, in silk, and rich cloth, shaded with the choicest colours, or as the Vulgate calls it, with feathered work, embroidered with gold. The beauty of their clothes consisted in the fineness and colour of the stuffs; and it seems, the colour most in use among the Israelites, as well as among the Greeks and Romans, was white, not imparted and im-

proved by the dyer's art, but the native colour of the wool, being most suited to the nature of their laws, which enjoined so many washings and purifications.* The general use of this colour seems to be recognized by Solomon in his direction, 'Let thy garments be always white.'† But garments, in the native colour of the wool, were not confined to the lower orders; they were also in great esteem among persons of superior station, and are particularly valued in Scripture, as the emblem of knowledge and purity, gladness and victory, grace and glory. The priests of Baal were habited in black; a colour which appears to have been peculiar to themselves, and which few others, in those countries, except mourners, would choose to wear. Blue was a sky colour in great esteem among the Jews, and other oriental nations. The robe of the ephod, in the gorgeous dress of the high priest, was made all of blue; it was a prominent colour in the sumptuous hangings of the tabernacle; and the whole people of Israel were required to put a fringe of blue upon the border of their garments, and on the fringe a riband of the same colour. The palace of Ahasuerus, the king of Persia, was furnished with curtains of this colour, on a pavement of red, and blue, and white marble; a proof it was not less esteemed in Persia, than on the Jordan. And from Ezekiel we learn, that the Assyrian nobles were habited in robes of this colour:—'She doated on the Assyrians, her neighbours, which were clothed with blue, captains and rulers, all of them desirable young men.'‡ It is one of the most remarkable vicissitudes in the generally stable customs of the East, that this beautiful colour, for many ages associated in their minds with every thing splendid, elegant, and rich, should have gradually sunk in public estimation,

* So early as the days of Hesiod, the Greeks considered white as the colour in which the celestials appeared:—Men went to heaven in white clothing.—*Opera et Dies.* l. 198.

† Eccles. ix. 8. ‡ Ezekiel xxiii. 12.

till it became connected with the ideas of meanness and vulgarity, and confined to the dress of the poor and the needy. In modern times, the whole dress of an Arabian female of low station, consists of drawers, and a very large shift, both of blue linen, ornamented with some needle-work of a different colour. And if credit may be given to Thevenot, the Arabs between Egypt and Mount Sinai, who lead a most wretched life, are clothed in a long blue shirt.* To solve this difficulty, Mr Harmer supposes that 'the art of dyeing blue was discovered in countries more to the east or south than Tyre; and that the dye had by no means become common in the days of Ezekiel, though some that were employed in the construction of the tabernacle, and some of the Tyrians in the time of Solomon, seem to have possessed the art of dyeing with blue. These blue cloths were manufactured in remote countries; and to them that wore scarcely any thing but woollens and linens of the natural colour, these blue calicoes formed very magnificent vestments. It does not appear, however, that the Jews ever wore garments wholly of this colour; and perhaps they abstained from it as sacred and mysterious, there being none more used about the tabernacle and the temple, in the curtains, veils, and vestments belonging to these sacred edifices.' †

The Jewish nobles and courtiers, upon great and solemn occasions, appeared in scarlet robes, dyed, not as at present with madder, with cochineal, or with any modern tincture, but with a shrub, whose red berries give an orient tinge to the cloth.‡ Crimson or vermilion, a colour as the name imports, from the blood of the worm, was used in the temple of Solomon, and by many persons of the first quality; sometimes they wore purple, the most sublime of all earthly colours, says Mr Harmer, having the gaudiness of red, of which

* Travels, part i. p. 173. See also Niebuhr's Description, &c., p. 57.
† Harmer's Observ. vol. iv. p. 449-451.
‡ Of the Ilex kind.

it retains a shade, softened with the gravity of blue. This was chiefly dyed at Tyre, and was supposed to take the tincture from the liquor of a shell-fish, anciently found in the adjacent sea; though Mr Bruce in his Travels, inclines to the opinion, that the murex, or purple fish at Tyre, was only a concealment of their knowledge of cochineal, as, if the whole city of Tyre had applied to nothing else but fishing, they would not have coloured twenty yards of cloth in a year.* The children of wealthy and noble families were dressed in vestments of different colours. This mark of distinction may be traced to the patriarchal age: for Joseph was arrayed by his indulgent and imprudent father, in a coat of many colours. [This variegated tunic, described on the margin as a coat of many 'pieces,' seems to have been a patchwork; the agreeable combination of colours being formed by sewing a number of patches into one robe. That this was the real description of Joseph's coat, is ascertained from the testimony of Mr Roberts, who informs us, that it is customary for parents to invest a beautiful or favourite child with 'a coat of many colours,' consisting of crimson, purple, and other colours, which are often tastefully *sewed together;* and also on the authority of Rauwolf, who has remarked, that people of rank in Syria dress their sons, when they are a little grown and can walk, in loose coats of a fine texture, and which, being of various colours, look very handsome.]

In other parts of the world, the fashion in dress is in a state of almost daily fluctuation, and different fashions are not unfrequently seen contending for the superiority; but in the East, where the people are by no means given to change, the form of their garments continues nearly the same from one age to another. The greater part of their clothes are long and flowing, loosely cast about the body, consisting only of a large piece of cloth, in the cutting and sewing of which very little art or

* Introduction to his Travels, p. 59, 4to edition.

industry is employed. They have more dignity and gracefulness than ours, and are better adapted to the burning climates of Asia. From the simplicity of their form, and their loose adaptation to the body, the same clothes might be worn with equal ease and convenience, by many different persons. The clothes of those Philistines whom Samson slew at Ashkelon, required no altering to fit his companions ; nor the robe of Jonathan to answer his friend. The arts of weaving and fulling seem to have been distinct occupations in Israel, from a very remote period, in consequence of the various and skilful operations which were necessary to bring their stuffs to a suitable degree of perfection ; but when the weaver and the fuller had finished their part, the labour was nearly at an end ; no distinct artizan was necessary to make them into clothes; every family seems to have made their own. These loose dresses, when the arm is lifted up, expose its whole length : To this circumstance, the prophet Isaiah refers :—'To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed'—uncovered—Who observes that he is about to exert the arm of his power?* [And, in like manner, in the chapter immediately following, he says :—'The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations ; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God ;'† on which a late christian missionary has made the following interesting remarks :—'The use of the oriental dress, which I now wear, brings to the mind this passage of Scripture. The figure is very lively ; for the loose sleeve of the Arab shirt, as well as that of the outer garment, leaves the arm so completely free, that in an instant, the left hand passing up the right arm, makes it bare ; and this is done when a person, a soldier for example, is about to strike with the sword, in order to give his right arm full play. The image represents Jehovah as suddenly prepared to inflict some tremen-

* Taylor's Calmet, vol. iii. Shaw's Travels, vol. i. p. 409.
† Isaiah lii. 10.

dous yet righteous judgment; so effectual, that all the ends of the world shall see the salvation of God.']

The chosen people were not allowed to wear clothes of any materials or form they chose; they were forbidden by their law to wear a garment of woollen and linen. This law did not prevent them from wearing many different substances together, but only these two; nor did the prohibition extend to the wool of camels and goats (for the hair of these animals they called by the same name), but only to that of sheep.* It was lawful for any man, who saw an Israelite dressed in such a garment, to fall upon him and put him to death. The design of Moses, according to some writers, was to preserve the chosen and holy people from the horrid confusion, by incestuous and unnatural mixtures, which prevailed among the heathen. But, in the opinion of Maimonides, it was principally intended as a preservative from idolatry; for the heathen priests of those times wore such mixed garments of woollen and linen, in the superstitious hope, it was imagined, of having the beneficial influence of some lucky conjunction of the planets or stars, to bring down a blessing upon their sheep and their flax.

The second restraint referred to the sexes, of which one was not to wear the dress appropriated to the other. This practice is said to be an abomination to the Lord; which plainly intimates, that the law refers to some idolatrous custom, of which Moses and the prophets always spoke in terms of the utmost abhorrence. Nothing, indeed, was more common among the heathen, in the worship of some of their false deities, than for the males to assist in women's clothes, and the females in the dress appropriated to men; in the worship of Venus, in particular, the women appeared before her in armour, and the men in women's apparel; and thus the words literally run in the original Scriptures, 'Women shall not put on the armour of a man,

* Woollen was prohibited, as producing sweat; Ezek. xliv. 17, 18.

nor a man the stole of a woman.' Maimonides says, he found this precept in an old magical book, 'That men ought to stand before the star of Venus in the flowered garments of women, and women to put on the armour of men before the star of Mars.' But whatever may be in these observations, it is certain, if there were no distinction of sexes made by their habits, it would be in danger of involving mankind in all manner of licentiousness and impurity.

The ancient Jews very seldom wore any covering upon their head, except when they were in mourning, or worshipping in the temple, or in the synagogue. To pray with the head covered, was, in their estimation, a higher mark of respect for the majesty of heaven, as it indicated the conscious unworthiness of the suppliant to lift up his eyes in the divine presence. To guard themselves from the wind or the storm, or from the still more fatal stroke of the sun-beam, to which the general custom of walking bare-headed particularly exposed them, they wrapped their heads in their mantles, or upper garments. But during their long captivity in Babylon, the Jews began to wear turbans, in compliance with the customs of their conquerors; for Daniel informs us, that his three friends were cast into the fiery furnace with their hats, or, as the term should be rendered, their turbans. It is not, however, improbable, that the bulk of the nation continued to follow their ancient custom; and that the compliance prevailed only among those Jews who were connected with the Babylonish court; for many ages after that, we find Antiochus Epiphanes introducing the habits and fashions of the Grecians among the Jews; and as the history of the Maccabees relates, he brought the chief young men under his subjection, and made them wear a hat.* Their legs were generally bare, and they never

* Folds of lawn, or other light stuffs, wound loosely round the temples, were the only head-coverings in use in the times of the patriarchs. The number and variety of the folds, in the modern turban, indicate the rank of the wearer.—*Editor.*

wore any thing upon the feet, but soles fastened in different ways, according to the taste or fancy of the wearer.

The Talmudists enumerate eighteen several garments which belonged to the full dress of an ancient Jew. A woollen shirt was worn next the skin, although some had shirts of linen in which they slept, because these were more cleanly and wholesome. But this part of their dress is to be distinguished from the caffetan or shirt, which the bridegroom and the bride sent to each other; which they wore over their clothes at their solemn festivals, and in which they were at last buried. Next to it was the coat, which reached to their feet, and was accounted a modest and honourable article of dress. This greatly aggravated the indignity which the king of Amnon offered to the ambassadors of David, by cutting off their garments in the middle to their buttocks; he insulted them by spoiling the most esteemed part of their dress; he exposed them to shame, by uncovering their nakedness, as they seem to have worn no breeches under their upper garments. The tunic was the principal part of the Jewish dress; it was made nearly in the form of our present shirt. A round hole was cut at top, merely to permit the head to pass through. Sometimes, it had long sleeves, which reached down to the wrists; at other times, short sleeves, which reached to the elbow; some had very short sleeves, which reached only to the middle of the upper arm, and some had no sleeves at all. The tunic was nearly the same with the Roman stola; and was, in general, girded round the waist, or under the breast, with the zona or girdle. Descending to the ground, and floating round the feet, it was, in the days of our Lord, a distinguishing badge of the proud Pharisee:—'Beware of the scribes,' said he, 'who love to walk in long robes,' in tunics at full length, and reaching to the ground. These coats were collared at the neck, and fringed at the bottom. Over the tunic they wore a

blanket, which the Arabs call a hyke, and is the very same with the plaid of the Scottish Highlanders. These hykes are of different sizes, and of different quality and fineness. They are commonly six yards long, and five or six feet broad; serving the Kabyle and Arab for a complete dress in the day; and 'as they sleep in raiment,' like the Israelites of old, it serves likewise for their bed and covering by night.* It is a loose, but troublesome garment, frequently discomposed, and falling upon the ground; so that the person who wears it, is every moment obliged to tuck it up, and fold it anew about his body. This shows the great use of a girdle whenever they are concerned in any active employment, and, by consequence, the force of the scripture injunction, alluding to that part of the dress, to have our loins girded,† in order to set about it with any reasonable prospect of success. The method of wearing these garments, and the use they are put to at other times in serving as coverlets to their beds, should induce us to take the finer sorts of them, at least such as are worn by the ladies and persons of distinction, to be the *peplus* of primitive times.‡ Ruth's veil, which held six measures of barley, might be of a similar fashion, and have served, upon extraordinary occasions, for the same use;§ as were also the clothes, or upper garments, worn by the Israelites,|| in which they

* Deuteronomy xxiv. 13. † Luke xvii. 8.

‡ Shaw's Travels, vol. i. p. 403-405.

§ We shall have occasion afterwards to describe more minutely the veils of eastern females. At present, it may be sufficient to remark, that the supposition in the text, that Ruth's veil was no other than the common Arab hyke or Roman toga, is not correct. The author has followed implicitly the description of the generally accurate and observant Shaw. But many travellers since his day, have described the veils of the women, and have ascertained that they form a perfectly distinct part of their dress. They are very different from the veils in use amongst us, being, in fact, large sheets, that are thrown over the head, and cover the whole person. Those of the poorer class consist of blue linen or cotton, striped with white, and they are very coarse and strong. Such, in all probability, was Ruth's veil.—*Editor.*

|| Exodus xii. 34.

folded up their kneading troughs, as the Arabs and others do to this day, things of similar burden and incumbrance, in their hykes. It is very probable, likewise, that the loose folding garment, the *toga* of the Romans, was of this kind; for if we may form our opinion from the drapery of their statues, this is no other than the dress of the Arabs, when they appear in their hykes.

'Instead of the fibula that was used by the Romans, the Arabs join together with thread,* or with a wooden bodkin, the two upper corners of this garment; and after having placed them first over one of their shoulders, they then fold the rest of it about their bodies. The outer fold serves them frequently instead of an apron, in which they carry herbs, loaves, corn, and other articles, and may illustrate several allusions made to it in Scripture:—Thus, "One of the sons of the prophets went out into the field, to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered there of wild gourds, *his lap full*."† And the Psalmist offers up his prayer, that Jehovah would "render unto his neighbours sevenfold into their bosom, their reproach."‡ The same allusion occurs in our Lord's direction to his disciples:—"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom."§ It was also the fold of this robe which Nehemiah shook before his people, as a significant emblem of the manner in which God should deal with the man who ventured to violate his oath and promise, to restore the possessions of their impoverished brethren:—"Also, I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise; even thus be he shaken out, and emptied."||

* In the days of Hesiod, the Greeks sewed their garments with thread made of the sinews of oxen. Opera et Dies. l. 544.

† 2 Kings iv. 39. ‡ Psalm lxxix. 12. § Luke vi. 38.

‖ Nehemiah v. 13. Shaw's Travels, vol. i. p. 406.

'Among the Arabs, a burnoose, which answers to our cloak, is often, for warmth, worn over these hykes. It is woven in one piece, strait about the neck, with a cape or Hippocrates' sleeve, for a cover to the head, and wide below like a cloak.* Some of them are fringed round the bottom; those without the cape seem to answer to the Roman pallium; and, with it, to the bardocucullus.' The cloak was also a common article of dress among the Jews, and is occasionally mentioned in the New Testament.

'If we except the cape of the burnoose, which is only used in a shower of rain, or in very cold weather, several Arabs and Kabyles go bare-headed all the year long, as Cicero states Masinissa did, equally regardless of the summer's heat, or winter's cold: *Nullo frigore adduci, ut capite operto sit.*† To prevent their locks from being troublesome, they bound their temples with a narrow fillet; which is of the same fashion, and serves the same purpose, as the ancient diadem. But the moors and Turks, with some of the principal Arabs, wear upon the crown of the head, a small hemispherical cap of scarlet cloth, round the bottom of which, the turban, as they call a long narrow web of linen, silk, or muslin, is folded.'‡ The diadem was also a part of the Jewish head-dress, and is mentioned by the prophet:—'In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people.'§ The *mitsnepheth*, or turban, was used in the East as early as the days of Job; for the afflicted man declares:—'I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my judgment was as a robe, and a diadem,' or turban.‖ In the prophecies of Ezekiel, it denotes the turban of the king:—'Thus saith the Lord God, Remove the diadem, and take away the crown,'

* Buckingham's Travels, vol. i. p. 77.
† Cicero de Senectute.
‡ Shaw's Travels, vol. i. p. 407.
§ Isaiah xxviii. 5. ‖ Job xxix. 14.

or turban; in Exodus, it signifies the turban of the high priest; in our translation, his mitre.*

These cloaks and plaids they usually throw off, when they engage in any labour or exercise, and remain only in their tunics.† Thus, when our Lord laid aside his upper garments, in order to wash the disciples' feet, he retained his coat or tunic, which he girded about his body with a towel, to prevent it from incommoding him during the operation. The apostle Peter also when he went a-fishing, appears to have laid aside his upper garments, and prosecuted his labours in his shirt and tunic; for when he heard from the beloved disciple, that it was Jesus who stood on the shore, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, for he was naked, that is, without his hyke and burnoose; or what the same person, at the command of the angel, might have girded upon him, before he was enjoined to resume his garment. Now, the hyke or burnoose, or both, being probably at that time the proper dress, clothing, or habit of the eastern nations, as they still continue to be of the Kabyles and Arabs, when they laid them aside, or appeared without one or the other, they might very probably be said to be undressed or naked, according to the eastern manner of expression. The king of Israel was said to be naked, although he was girded with a linen ephod; and among the Romans, a person was represented as naked who had laid aside his upper garment: *Rejecta veste superiore.*‡

The girdle is an indispensable article in the dress of

* Exodus xxviii. 4. [The diadems of kings in ancient times were nothing more than turbans of fine linen, adorned in front with a row of gold or precious stones. Even Alexander the Great had no better diadem; as we are informed by his historian Justin, that he took it off, and applied it to staunch the wounds of Lysimachus. That of the high priest of the Jews was exactly the same; it was of fine linen, while those of the ordinary priests differed from it in wanting the frontlet of gold. Josephus mentions an additional distinction to the turban or mitre of the high priest, that of having a purple cover.]—*Editor.*

† Shaw's Trav. vol. i. p. 408. ‡ Shaw's Trav. vol. i. p. 409.

an oriental:* it has various uses; but the principal one is to tuck up their long flowing vestments, that they may not incommode them in their work, or on a journey. The Jews, according to some writers, wore a double girdle, one of greater breadth, with which they girded their tunic when they prepared for active exertions; the other they wore under their shirt, around their loins. This under girdle they reckon necessary to distinguish between the heart, and the less honourable parts of the human frame. The upper girdle was sometimes made of leather, the material of which the girdle of John the Baptist was made.† [It was a girdle of untanned leather, similar to what is worn by the dervishes of the present day, whose dress corresponds exactly to that worn by the Baptist, who, by the adoption of this style of clothing, designed to show his mortified dispositions, and the little value he set on personal decorations. In no article of his dress could he manifest this superiority more than in respect to the girdle, on which the prevailing taste of eastern people has always lavished more than ordinary attention. It is generally composed of costly materials, wrought with elaborate art into a variety of ornamental figures and flowers, by the art of the weaver, or the embroiderer. Although the main design of it is to tighten the loose flowing garments round the waist, yet being thus made a piece of ornamental furnishing, it is among the better classes worn of a great length, sometimes even thirty or forty feet, which is tastefully wound round the person in various folds, and very often consists of silk richly embroidered, or beautifully prepared and coloured leather, sometimes even set with jewels.] But it was more commonly fabricated of worsted, often very artfully woven into a variety of

* '*Gird* up thy loins now like a *man*.'—Job. xl. 7.

† The girdle among the Mahrattas is generally made of strong leather, covered with velvet, and divided into small compartments, containing their most valuable papers and precious jewels.—*Forbes' Oriental Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 61.

figures, and made to fold several times about the body; one end of which being doubled back, and sewn along the edges, serves them for a purse, agreeably, says Dr Shaw, to the acceptation of ζωνη in the Scriptures, which is translated purse in several places of the New Testament.* The ancient Romans, in this, as in many other things, imitated the orientals; for their soldiers, and probably all classes of the citizens, used to carry their money in their girdles. Whence, in Horace, *qui zonam perdidit*, means one who had lost his purse; and in Aulus Gellius, C. Gracchus is introduced, saying, Those girdles which I carried out full of money when I went from Rome, I have at my return from the province brought again empty.† 'The Turks make a further use of these girdles, by fixing their knives and poignards in them; while the writers and secretaries suspend in them their ink-horns; a custom as old as the time of the prophet Ezekiel, who mentions 'a person clothed in white linen, with an ink-horn upon his loins.'‡ That part of the ink-holder which passes between the girdle and the tunic, and receives their pens, is long and flat; but the vessel for the ink, which rests upon the girdle, is square, with a lid to clasp over it.'§

* Matt. x. 9; and Mark vi. 8. † See Burder, *in loc.* ‡ Ezek. ix. 2.

§ Shaw's Travels, vol. i. p. 410. Malcolm's History of Persia, vol. ii. p. 572. Du Tott's Memoir, vol. ii. p. 118. [A recent traveller thus describes the ink-horn of the East:—That in most general use is a flat case, about nine inches long, by an inch and a quarter broad, and half an inch thick, the hollow of which serves to contain the reed pens and penknife. It is furnished at one end with a lid attached by a hinge. To the flat side of this shaft, at the end furnished with the lid, is soldered the ink vessel, which has at the top a lid with a hinge and clasp, fitting very closely. The ink vessel is usually twice as heavy as the shaft. The latter is passed through the girdle, and is prevented from slipping through by the projecting ink vessel. The whole is usually of polished metal, brass, copper, or silver. Such an ink-horn is, of course, not adapted for the kind of ink used amongst us, and, accordingly, we are informed that the fluid employed in the East, which, moreover, is better fitted for their written characters, is made of lamp-black, or powdered charcoal, prepared with gum and water, and sold in grains. When the writer wishes to replenish his ink-horn, he puts

To loose the girdle and give it to another, was among the orientals, a token of great confidence and affection. Thus to ratify the covenant which Jonathan made with David, and to express his cordial regard for his friend, among other things, he gave him his girdle. A girdle, curiously and richly wrought, was among the ancient Hebrews a mark of honour, and sometimes bestowed as a reward of merit; for this was the recompense which Joab declared he meant to bestow on the man who put Absalom to death:—'Why didst thou not smite him there to the ground, and I would have given thee ten shekels of silver, and a girdle.'* The reward was certainly meant to correspond with the importance of the service which he expected him to perform, and the dignity of his own station as commander-in-chief: we may, therefore, suppose it was not a common one of leather or plain worsted, but of costly materials, and richly adorned; for people of rank and fashion in the East, wear very broad girdles, all of silk, and superbly ornamented with gold and silver and precious stones, of which they are extremely proud, regarding them as the tokens of their superior station, the proof of their riches, and the badge of a commissioned officer.

Many of the Arabian inhabitants of Palestine and Barbary wear no shirts, but go almost entirely naked, or with only a cloth cast about their bodies, or a kind of mantle.† It is not improbable, that the poorer in-

a little of this into the vessel, adds a little water to it, which makes it of a consistency similar to that used by our printers. It is of a jet black colour, and will remain without fading for ages; and yet it is so far from making any deep or lasting mark on the substance written upon, whatever that may be, that it can be washed out, or effaced with water,—a circumstance to which allusion is made in the book of Numbers, where the priest is required to write curses against particular delinquents in a book, and blot them out with the bitter water, Numbers v. 23; and also in that well known passage, 'blotting out the handwriting of ordinances which was against us,' Coloss. ii. 14.]—*Editor.*

* 2 Sam. xviii. 11.

† Pococke's Trav. vol. i. p. 190. Egmont and Heyman's Trav. vol. i. p. 298.

habitants of Judea were clothed in much the same manner, as the Arabs of those countries in modern times, having no shirts, but only a sort of mantle to cover their naked bodies. If this be just, it greatly illustrates the promise of Samson to give his companions thirty sheets, or, as it is more properly rendered in the margin of our bibles, thirty shirts, if they could discover the meaning of his riddle. It cannot easily be imagined they were what we call sheets, for Samson might have slain thirty Philistines near Ashkelon, and not have found one sheet ; or, if he slew them who were carrying their beds with them on their travels, as they often do in present times, the slaughter of fifteen had been sufficient, for in the East, as in other countries, every bed is provided with two sheets ; but he slew just thirty ; in order to obtain thirty *sedinim* or shirts. If this meaning of the term be admitted, the deed of Samson must have been very provoking to the Philistines ; for since only people of more easy circumstances wore shirts, they were not thirty of the common people that he slew, but thirty persons of figure and consequence. The same word is used by the prophet Isaiah, in his description of the splendid and costly dress in which people of rank and fashion then delighted, rendered in our translation fine linen ; which seems to place it beyond a doubt that they were persons of rank that fell by the hand of Samson on that occasion.

But it is by no means improbable, that these sheets were the hykes or blankets already described, which are worn by persons of all ranks in Asia. Pococke, who gives a description of this vestment, and of the way in which it is wrapped about the body, not materially different from the account of it in a preceding section, particularly observed that the young people, and the poorer sort about Faiume, had nothing on whatever but this blanket ; hence it is probable, that the young man was clothed in this manner who followed our Saviour when he was taken, having a linen cloth

cast about his naked body. 'When the young men,' who came to apprehend Jesus, 'laid hold of' this young man, 'he left the linen cloth, and fled from them:' but this language by no means requires us to suppose that he was absolutely naked, but only that he chose rather to quit his hyke or plaid, than run the risk of being made a prisoner, although by doing so he became unduly exposed. This view is confirmed by the observations formerly made on the hyke and tunic; and by the state of the weather, which was so cold, that the servants of the high priest were compelled to kindle a fire in the midst of the hall to warm themselves. It is very improbable, that he would go into the garden on such a night so thinly clothed; and we have no reason to think he was so poor, that this linen cloth was the only article of clothing in his possession. But Mr Harmer and other expositors, considering that the apostles were generally poor men, and that the poor in those countries had often no other covering than this blanket, rather suppose, that the terrified young man fled away in a state of absolute nudity. But if it was the apostle John, where was he furnished with clothes to appear almost immediately after in the high priest's hall? This difficulty Mr Harmer endeavours to remove by supposing, that from the garden he might go to his usual place of residence in the city, and clothe himself anew before he went to the palace.*

The orientals always cast their mantle or cloak over them when they go abroad; and it has been observed already, that they use it as a blanket or coverlet when they go to sleep. For this reason, although Jehovah permitted his people to receive the upper garments of their neighbour in pawn, because he could not do without them during the day; yet he commanded them in express terms, to restore such a pledge at night, because, said the lawgiver, 'It was his covering only, the raiment for his skin, wherein he slept.'†

* Harmer's Observ. vol. iv. p. 344, &c. † Exod. xxii. 26.

Their legs, it has been already observed, were generally bare ; but some of them wore a sort of buskins, which were laced about the ankle, and reached up to the calf of the leg. Upon their feet they wore sandals, which were merely soles fastened with straps, made at first of raw hides, but afterwards of leather.* When the sandals were taken off, the strings were of course untied, which it was the proper business of servants to do. John the Baptist alluded to this menial office, when he announced to the multitudes the coming of Christ :—'One mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose ;' that is, I am not worthy to do the meanest office about the Messiah. [The practice of taking off one's shoes, on entering a house, renders it necessary for every person of respectability to have a servant in attendance to perform this office for him and his guests, as well as tie them on again when retiring. The duty is devolved only on the lowest menials ; and hence the humble and devoted Baptist, in order to express how insignificant he was in comparison with Him, with the great personage of whom he heralded the approach, pronounced himself unworthy even of standing in the meanest relations to him :—'There cometh one mightier than I, after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.'†] When the sandals were untied, the feet were washed, to remove the impurities which this very imperfect contrivance could not prevent, and anointed with oil to counteract the hurtful effects of heat.

Shoes were also in use among the natives of Asia; but their precise form cannot easily be ascertained. The difference between the sandal and the shoe is thus stated by the Talmudists:—Shoes were of more delicate use, sandals were more ordinary and fitter for service ;

* Sometimes they were made of bark or wood. The Egyptian priests wore sandals made of papyrus.—*Editor.*

† Mark i. 7.

a shoe was of softer leather, a sandal of harder: There were sandals also, whose sole or lower part was of wood, the upper of leather; and these were fastened together with nails. Some sandals also were made of rushes, or of the bark of palm trees, and they were all open both ways, so that one might put in his foot either before or behind. Those of a violet or purple colour were most valued, and worn by persons of the first quality and distinction.*

[Shoes in the East are very different from those in use amongst us. Many of them, especially such as are worn in Turkey and Arabia, resemble our slippers, having no quarters, and made so as to cover no more of the foot than the toes. In other parts of the East, they have no latchets, and are formed for the most part of coloured leather, red or yellow morocco, or sometimes green shagreen. Ladies of rank and opulence have them beautifully ornamented, not only bound to the foot and leg with a great variety of graceful and elaborate lacings, but inwrought with lines of gold, silver, or silk, and not seldom embroidered and decorated with jewels. It was probably these costly and elegant accompaniments of a lady's dress, that Solomon had in his eye, when, describing the appearance of the bride, he says, 'How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter!' †]

The use of shoes may be traced to the patriarchal age. Abraham protested to the king of Sodom, after his victory over Amraphel and his associates, 'I have lifted up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread, even to a shoe latchet.'‡ And when the Lord appeared to Moses in the bush, he commanded him to put off his shoes from his feet, for the place on which he stood was holy ground.§ In imita-

* Harmer's Observ. vol. iv. pp. 302, 303.
† Song of Solomon vii. i.
‡ Gen. xiv. 22, 23. § Exod. iii. 5.

tion of this memorable example, the priests officiated in the temple barefoot; and all the orientals, under the guidance of tradition, put off their shoes when they enter their holy places.* The learned Bochart is of opinion, that the Israelites used no shoes in Egypt; but being to take a long journey, through a rough and barren wilderness, God commanded them to eat the passover with shoes on their feet;† and those very shoes which they put on at that festival, when they were ready to march, he suffered not to decay during the whole forty years they traversed the desert; and to increase the miracle, Grotius adopts the idle conceit of some Jewish writers, that their clothes enlarged as they grew up to maturity, and their shoes also underwent a similar enlargement. This was not impossible with Jehovah, but it seems to have been quite unnecessary, for the clothes and shoes of those that died, might serve their children when they grew up; and it was sufficiently wonderful, without such an addition, that their clothes should not decay, nor their shoes wear, nor their feet swell, by travelling over hot and sandy deserts for the long period of forty years.‡

It only remains to be observed, on this part of the subject, that no covering for the foot can exclude the dust in those parched regions; and, by consequence, the custom of washing and anointing the feet, which is,

* The lobby of their mosques is filled with shoes, just as the lobby of a house, or recess in a church, is filled with hats amongst us.—*Editor.*

† Generally people in the East put off their shoes before partaking of their meals.—*Editor.*

‡ In these hot countries, people ordinarily wore sandals, which were, as described, a sort of clogs; or they went often barefoot, especially when walking on grass. But in travelling they used shoes, which were, indeed, a sort of short boots, reaching a little way up the legs. Hence, when our Saviour sent his twelve disciples to preach in the neighbouring villages, designing to convince them, by their own experience, of the extraordinary care of divine providence over them, that they might not be discouraged by the dangers of the journeys they would be called to undertake, he ordered them to make no provision for their present journey, particularly not to take shoes on their feet, but to be shod with sandals.—*Editor.*

perhaps, coeval with the existence of the human race, is not to be ascribed to the use of sandals. Whatever covering for the foot may be used, Chardin declares, it is still necessary to wash and anoint the feet after a journey. [The exposure of the feet, for want of stockings, to all manner of dust, made it one of the first and most necessary duties of hospitality, on the arrival of a guest, to furnish him with water. In the remotest antiquity we find traces of this kindly attention to the state of the traveller; for, in the memorable entertainment of the angels by Abraham, the offer of this refreshment was the first office of kindness proposed to the strangers by their venerable host:—'Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet and rest yourselves, under this tree.' In the stories of Laban and Joseph, we read of the same hospitable attention being rendered to their visitors; and, in the time of our Lord, it was so far from having fallen into desuetude, that the neglect of it by a landlord was considered as a marked insult; and Simon the Pharisee, who, in his own house, treated Jesus with studied disrespect, received a well merited reproof for his unbecoming behaviour:—'I entered into thine house; thou gavest me no water for my feet.'* While it was the duty of the master of a house to provide this refreshment for his guests the moment they arrived, the business itself, of course, in all respectable houses, was left to servants, whose duty it was not only to untie the sandals, as already described, but to wash the feet; and hence our Lord, when he wished to give his disciples a lesson of humility and brotherly kindness, which would leave an indelible impression on their minds, taught it by an act which drew from the honest heart of Peter, a remonstrance with his Master against condescension so great and so unexpected.† In houses, however, where there are no servants, the mistress of the family considers it as her duty to perform this in-

* Luke vii. 44. † John xiii. 4, 16.

dispensable act of hospitality with her own hands; and to the traveller in a strange land, who is obliged to depend on the uncertain benevolence of others, this act of attention, which is the first that is always paid, sets him at ease at once, and satisfies him as to the degree of kindliness and welcome reception he may reasonably expect. Among the primitive Christians, who were frequently obliged to wander from one distant place to another, without the prospect of any certain abode, or of being comfortably lodged, this little attention to the wants of the christian travellers, was a token on the part of the person who rendered it, of attachment to the sacred cause which they had embraced; and, accordingly, it is included in the list of the qualifications of the widows whom the apostle recommends to the benevolence and support of the church, that they have washed the saints' feet.]

It is also the custom every where among the Asiatics, to carry a staff in their hand,* and a handkerchief to wipe the sweat from their face. The handkerchiefs are wrought with a needle; and to embroider and adorn them is one of the elegant amusements of the other sex.†

Persons devoted to a life of austerity, commonly wore a dress of coarser materials. John the Baptist, we are told in the sacred volume, was clothed in a garment of camel's hair, with a broad leathern girdle about his loins. It is a circumstance worthy of notice, that the

* Staves were always carried by travellers, and indeed were indispensable in countries where, there being no roads, or exceedingly rough and bad ones, a staff was of the greatest use in helping them over rugged or slippery places; and, as there was a risk that in such circumstances, their staff might break, it was customary for all who were entering on long journeys to carry a spare one in their hands. To this practice our Lord alludes on the occasion of his despatching his disciples on their first embassy to preach the gospel, and with a view of impressing them with a strong sense of the paternal care which Divine Providence would take of them, he commanded them not to encumber themselves with the full accoutrements which travellers reckoned necessary, 'take nothing for your journey save a staff only.' Mark vi. 8.—*Editor.*

† Harmer's Observ. vol. iv. p. 306.

finest and most elegant shawls, which constitute so essential a part of the Turkish dress, and are worn by persons in the highest ranks of life, are fabricated of camel's hair. These unquestionably belong to the 'soft raiment' worn by the residents in the palaces of eastern kings. But it is evident that the inspired writer intends, by the remark on the dress of John, to direct our attention to the meanness of his attire. 'What went ye out for to see? a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that are in king's houses wear soft clothing;' but the garments of John were of a very different kind. It is, indeed, sufficiently apparent, that the inhabitants of the wilderness, where John spent his days before he entered upon his ministry, and other thinly settled districts, manufactured a stuff, in colour and texture somewhat resembling our coarse black hair-cloths, of the hair which fell from their camels, for their own immediate use, of which the raiment of that venerable prophet consisted. In the same manner, the Tartars of modern times, work up their camel's hair into a kind of felt, which serves as a covering to their tents, although their way of life is the very reverse of easy and pompous.* Like the austere herald of the Saviour, the modern dervishes wear garments of the same texture, which they too, gird about their loins with great leathern girdles.† Elijah, the Tishbite, seems to have worn a habit of camel's hair, equally mean and coarse: for he is represented in our translation as a 'hairy man,' which perhaps ought to be referred to his dress, and not to his person. A garment of hair-cloth was, in those times, the costume of a prophet; and was assumed occasionally by impostors, to enable them with greater ease and success to deceive their credulous neighbours. 'And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision,

* Baron du Tott's Memoirs, part ii. p. 50.

† Light's Travels, p. 135. Morrier's Second Journey, p. 44.

when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough,' or hairy, 'garment to deceive.'* The prophet Isaiah was clothed in the same stuff, for God required him to 'loose the sackcloth from off his loins.'† Sackcloth of hair was deemed a badge of humiliation and self-denial; and was probably, for this reason, selected as the most proper material for the official habiliments of an ancient prophet. Joel accordingly commands the priests and Levites, Come, lie all night, or constantly, 'in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God.'‡ In allusion to the same mode of thinking, it is said, 'the sun became black as sackcloth of hair.'§ And Isaiah declares in the name of the Lord, 'I clothe the heavens with blackness, I make sackcloth their covering.'‖ These statements throw light on that expression, 'My two witnesses shall prophesy, clothed in sackcloth:'¶—arrayed in the official dress of ancient prophets,** and like them humble and self-denied, but very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts, and fearless in the discharge of their duty.

[This mean and sordid dress, however, was not exclusively confined to the prophets; it was the ordinary expression of grief and sorrow among the orientals. In a subsequent part of this work, we shall have occasion to show that it formed an indispensable part of mourning and funeral habiliments; but at present it may suffice to remark, that it was the usual external mode of intimating repentance and humiliation of soul, when custom taught them to lay aside their ordinary garments and ornamental finery. It was by appearing in this dress that David, when crushed to the earth by the unexpected revolt of his subjects under

* Zech. xiii. 4. † Isa. xx. 2. ‡ Joel i. 13.
§ Rev. vi. 12. ‖ Isaiah l. 3. ¶ Rev. xi. 3.
** It is not quite correct to call such the official dress of ancient prophets. In an earlier part of this paragraph, the author stated with accuracy, that haircloth was their ordinary or professional costume. Sackcloth was assumed only in seasons of great public calamity, when they were charged with some extraordinary message.—*Editor.*

Absalom, signified his bitter disappointment, and humbled himself before God :—'I made sackcloth my garment.'* It was by appearing in this dress that Tamar intimated her distress at the unnatural crime of her brother Ammon.† It was thus that Mordecai, expressed his painful emotions, when perceiving all that was done, he rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth.‡ It was thus that Daniel set his face unto the Lord God, to seek, by prayer and supplication, with fasting and sackcloth.§ It was thus that the Ninevites expressed their profound humiliation under the threatened visitation of Providence, when they covered both man and beast with sackcloth;‖ and it was in conformity with this practice that our Lord, describing the sad state of moral destitution in which the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida had sunk themselves by the rejection of Him and his works, says, 'If the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth.'¶ On the contrary, whenever a person was relieved from his distress, or met with any circumstances to enliven or exhilarate his spirits, his altered emotions were forthwith indicated by abandoning this humble and forbidding garb for a more cheerful and attractive dress. It is to this practice that Isaiah alludes when describing the office of the predicted Messiah, he says, that that illustrious personage shall be anointed to appoint unto them that mourn, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. And an interesting example of this practice is given by Zechariah, in that passage where he describes, under the type of Joshua the high priest, the promised restoration and flourishing state of the church :—'And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and an adversay standing at his right hand to resist

* Psalm lxix. 11. † 2 Sam. xiii. 19. ‡ Esther iv. 1.
§ Daniel ix. 3. ‖ Jonah iii. 5. ¶ Matt. xi. 21.

him. And the Lord said unto the adversary, The Lord rebuke thee, O adversary: even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel, and he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments.'*]

The habit of eastern females was also suited to their station; and women of all ages and conditions, appeared in dresses of the same fashion; only a married woman wore a veil upon her head, in token of subjection;† and a widow had a garment which indicated her widowed state. The daughters of a king, and ladies of high rank, who were virgins, wore a garment of many colours, reaching, as is supposed, to the heels or ankles, with long sleeves down to the wrists, which had a border at the bottom, and a facing at the hands, of a colour different from the garment: it was likewise embroider-

* Zech. iii. 1-5. A change of dress was resorted to on other occasions, besides being customary after seasons of mourning or humiliation. It was in this way that the eastern people did, and do still, prepare themselves for engaging in acts of more than ordinary devotion; and accordingly we read of Jacob, after his journey from Mesopotamia, commanding his household 'to change their garments, and go with him to sacrifice at Bethel' (Gen. xxxv. 2, 3). Where the wardrobe is scanty and limited, the expedient is adopted of washing on such occasions; and hence, as most of the mighty population that followed Moses into the wilderness, were poor, and but indifferently provided with clothing, we find him requiring them to make preparations for receiving the law, by purifying and washing their clothes. (Exod. xix. 10.)—*Editor.*

† 'The women,' says Thevenot, 'within doors, have their faces uncovered; but those of Armenia, in their houses, have always one half of their faces covered with a cloth, that goes athwart their noses, and hangs over their chins and breasts; except the young women, who, within doors, cover only the chin, *until they be married.*'—*Travels*, part ii. p. 93.—*Editor.*

ed with flowers, which, in ancient times, was reckoned both splendid and beautiful. [This elegant piece of female attire, which is worn under the tunic, sometimes shaped like a long flowing shirt, oftener in the form of the wide and loose drawers of the East, was wrought by the needle; and as the embroidery in ancient times was the occupation or pastime only of ladies of the highest rank, the possession of these party coloured garments was a mark of distinction, and they were worn exclusively by young women of noble or royal condition, as Tamar was.* In after ages, when the art of interweaving a variegated pattern with the simple cloth, or of printing was discovered, dresses of this beautiful description became more common, and are generally worn by ladies in the East in the present day.†] A common prostitute, among the Jews, was known, as well by the peculiar vesture she wore, as by having no covering upon her head, and her eye-brows painted with stibium, which dilated the hair, and made the eyes look black and beautiful. In the days of Jacob, the harlot seems to have been distinguished by her veil, and by wrapping herself in some peculiar manner; for these are the circumstances that induced Judah to consider Tamar, his daughter-in-law, as a woman of this character :—'She put her widow's garments off from her, and covered her with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place, which is by the way to Timnath.'‡ When Judah saw her, he thought her to be an harlot, because she had covered her face. It may be justly inferred from this passage, that modest women did not constantly wear

* These gorgeous dresses are worn also in the form of cloaks, by military officers of high rank in the East; and, like the cloaks in use amongst us, they are made to sit closely to the neck. Such was the spoil which the mother of Sisera longed to see her victorious son arrayed with :—'To Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needle-work on both sides, meet for the *necks* of them that take the spoil;' Judges v. 30. The 'goodly Babylonish garment' that Achan purloined, was a cloak of this description.—Josh. vii. 21.—*Editor.* † 2 Samuel xiii. 18. ‡ Genesis xxxviii. 14.

a veil in those days. Rebecca, indeed, put a veil on her face when she met Isaac in the field: but it was a part of the marriage ceremony to deliver the bride covered with a veil, from head to foot; and Rebecca, in this instance only followed the established custom of her country.* Had it been the practice of modest women in that age to cover their faces, in the presence of the other sex, she would not have needed to veil herself when her future husband met her in the field. She seems to have had no veil when Abraham's servant accosted her at the well; nor, for any thing that can be discovered, was Rachel veiled at her first interview with Jacob; or if they did appear in veils, these prevented not a part of the face from being seen. The practice of wearing veils, except at the marriage ceremony, must, therefore, be referred to a later period, and was perhaps not introduced till after the lapse of several ages.† These observations may serve to illustrate the address of Abimelech to Sarah:—'Behold, he is to thee a *covering of the eyes*, unto all that are with thee; and with all other.'‡ Sarah, you have not been used to wear the veil constantly when at home, as a person of your beauty and accomplishments should do, and by that circumstance we were tempted; but now I insist that you wear a covering, which, by concealing your beautiful countenance, may prevent such desires; and henceforth be *correct* (as the word may be rendered, that is, *circumspect*), and do not show yourself: or, as in our translation, thus she was *corrected*, *reproved*, by a very handsome compliment paid to her beauty, and a very handsome present paid to her brother, as Abraham is sarcastically termed by Abimelech.§

In modern times, the women of Syria never appear in the streets without their veils. These are of two

* Russel's History of Aleppo, vol. ii. p. 80.
† Harmer's Observations, vol. iv. pp. 253, 254.
‡ Gen. xx. 16. Taylor's Calmet, vol. iii. § Ibid.

kinds, the furragi and the common Aleppo veil; the former being worn by some of the Turkish women only, the latter indiscriminately by all. The first is in the form of a large cloak, with long strait sleeves, and a square hood hanging flat on the back; it is sometimes made of linen, sometimes of shawl or cloth. This veil, reaching to the heels, conceals the whole of the dress, from the neck downwards; while the head and face are covered by a large white handkerchief over the head dress and forehead, and a smaller one tied transversely over the lower part of the face, hanging down on the neck. Many of the Turkish women, instead of the smaller handkerchief, use a long piece of black crape stiffened, which, sloping a little from the forehead, leaves room to breathe more freely. In this last way, the ladies are completely disguised; in the former, the eyes and nose remaining visible, they are easily known by their acquaintances.*

The *radid* is a species of veil, which Calmet supposes is worn by married women, as a token of their

* From the continued pressure of this veil against the end of the nose, it is described by some travellers to have produced a general protuberance of that organ by no means pleasing. There is no gracefulness in the figure, no attraction in the countenance of the eastern ladies thus cloaked and swathed, and veiled; their appearance is clumsy, and altogether a burlesque on female elegance; the hair, hands, complexion, are all shrouded: the feet are put into shoes or slippers, that to a Chinese beauty would be the size of canoes. Shuffling along, the lights of the Harem 'leave all their light and beauty behind; the watchful and keen glance of the dark eye, that is sometimes shot through the folds of drapery, has more of a duenna than a Leila look. Even among the Bedouins, in the interior of the deserts, an exceeding caution is observed among the women, who pass from tent to tent, and across the sand of the encampment, carefully veiled, even from their neighbours and friends. We dwelt many days in one of these camps in the wilderness, and during that time many daughters of the tribe passed to and fro before our tent, or the adjoining tents, but the shroud that covers the head, and gently keeps the fading features from the living, could not more effectually do its work than did the long white cotton veil of the Arab girls; their gait was graceful, their figure light and slender, the foot was set off by the sandal, that only but partially covered it; but the face was impenetrably closed.'—*Carne's Views in Syria and the Holy Land*, vol. ii. p. 20.—*Editor.*

submission and dependence, and descends low down on the person. To lift up the veil of a virgin, is reckoned a gross insult;* but to take away the veil of a married woman, is one of the greatest indignities that she can receive, because it deprives her of the badge which distinguishes and dignifies her in that character, and betokens her alliance to her husband, and her interest in his affections. This is the reason why the spouse so feelingly complains:—'They took away my veil (*radid*) from me.'† When it is forcibly taken away by the husband, it is equivalent to divorce, and justly reckoned a most severe calamity; therefore, God threatened to take away the ornamental dresses 'of the daughters of Zion,' including the *radidim*, the low descending veils:—'In that day, the Lord will take away . . . . the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils.'‡

The ordinary Aleppo veil is a linen sheet, large enough to cover the whole habit from head to foot, and is brought over the face in a manner to conceal all but one eye.§ This custom is alluded to by the bridegroom, in these words:—'Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes.'‖ Thy slightly opened veil, my consort, suffers only a part of thy fair countenance to be seen; yet that small part, though it be but a cheek or an eye, ravishes my heart: yea, when the still slenderer opening of thy veil suffers but a single link of thy

* To lift up the veil of a young woman is, in the style of oriental writers, equivalent to the grossest indignities. Thus, for example, D'Herbelot, says Cabihah, the mother of Khalif Motaz, complained of Saleh, the Turkish chief, that 'he has torn my veil,' to express with decency, he has dishonoured me.—*Biblioth. Orient.* p. 643.—*Ed.*

† Song v. 7. This was done with a view of discovering who she was; and all who are acquainted with eastern customs know that eunuchs, or keepers of the palace-houses of eastern grandees, are empowered to do the same thing still to the women committed to their guardianship.—*Editor.*

‡ Isa. iii. 18, &c.

§ Russel's Hist. vol. ii. p. 78; and Buckingham's Trav. vol. i. p. 78.

‖ Song iv. 9.

necklace to appear, that single link attracts my kindest regard, on account of the beauteous neck which it adorns.'*

In Barbary, when the ladies appear in public, they always fold themselves up so closely in their hykes, that even without their veils, one can discover very little of their faces. But, in the summer months, when they retire to their country seats, they walk abroad with less caution ; though even then, on the approach of a stranger, they always drop their veils, as Rebecca did on the approach of Isaac.† But, although they are so closely wrapped up, that those who look at them cannot even see their hands, still less their faces, yet it is reckoned indecent in a man to fix his eyes upon them ; he must let them pass without seeming at all to observe them. In allusion to this rigorous custom, Job says, 'I made a covenant with mine eyes ; why then should I think upon a maid ?' When a lady of distinction, says Hanway,‡ travels on horseback, she is not only veiled, but has generally a servant who runs or rides before her, to clear the way : and on such occasions, the men, even in the market-places, always turn their backs till the women are past, it being thought a gross violation of good manners to look at them. A lady in the East considers herself degraded when she is exposed to the gaze of the other sex, which accounts for the conduct of Vashti in refusing to obey the command of the king.|| Their ideas of decency, on the other hand, forbid a virtuous woman to lay aside, or even to lift up her veil, in the presence of the other sex. She who ventures to disregard this prohibition, inevitably ruins her character. From that moment she is noted as a woman of easy virtue, and her act is regarded as a signal for intrigue. Pitts informs us, that in Barbary the courtezan appears in public with-

* Taylor's Calmet, vol. iii. † Shaw's Trav. vol. i. p. 412.
‡ Trav. part iii. chap. 40. vol. i. p. 185.
|| Forbes' Orient. Mem. vol. iii. pp. 194, 218, 219.

out her veil; and in the book of Proverbs, the harlot exposed herself in the same indecent manner :—So she caught him, and kissed him, and with *an impudent face*,' a face uncovered and shameless, ' said unto him, I have peace-offerings with me, this day have I paid my vows.'*

The eastern females wear their hair, which the prophet emphatically calls the ' instrument of their pride,'† very long, and divided into a great number of tresses. In Barbary, the ladies all affect to have their hair hang down to the ground, which, after they have collected into one lock, they bind and plait with ribbons. [It is not easy to convey an idea of the elaborate pains bestowed by oriental ladies on their head dress. Their great pride consists in having long flowing hair, which they plait into a variety of fanciful figures, displaying a degree of care, ingenuity, and skill, which the most accomplished hair-dresser in Europe might envy. Generally smooth and parted on the forehead, it is tastefully wrought on the crown into an imitation of a cornet, a harp, a wreath, or allowed to hang down on each temple like clusters of grapes, or woven into a basket of flowers, while over all there is strewed an incredible profusion of gold and silver filings or coins, amid which are interspersed concentric rows of pearls on the brow and top of the head, while the long tresses that hang down the back have also little wreaths of gold, or clusters of pearls attached to their extremities, and draw down their hair by their weight the whole length of the figure. The utmost brilliancy is imparted to the appearance by this prodigal display of jewellery and flowers, to provide greater space for which, some have the top of their heads surmounted by a cap of gold in the form of an inverted cup, from the middle of which a string of gold with a row of pearls is suspended down the back.] This extravagant finery the apostle marks with disapprobation : — ' Whose

* Prov. vii. 13, 14. † Ezek. xvi. 39. Marg.

adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel.'* Not that he condemns in absolute terms, all regard to neatness and elegance in dress and appearance, but only an undue attention to these things; his meaning plainly is:—'Whose adorning, let it not chiefly consist in that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, but rather let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God, of great price.'† The way in which the apostle uses the negative particle in this text, is a decisive proof that this is his true meaning; it extends to every member of the sentence; and, by consequence, if it prohibit the plaiting of hair, it equally prohibits the putting on of apparel. But it never could be his design to forbid women to wear clothes, or to be decently and neatly dressed; therefore, the negative must have only a comparative sense, instructing us in the propriety and necessity of attending more to the dispositions of the mind, than to the adorning of the body. And as one inspired writer cannot, in reality, contradict another, the command of Paul must be explained in the same way, and not as an absolute, but comparative prohibition:—'In like manner that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with,' or according to this view, rather than with 'broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array.'‡ Where nature has been less liberal in its ornaments, the defect is supplied by art, and foreign is procured to be interwoven with the natural hair. The males, on the contrary, shave all the hair off their heads, excepting one lock; and those who wear their hair are stigmatized as effeminate.

* Shaw's Travels, vol. i. p. 412.—The same custom prevails in Turkey; the girls have their hair finely plaited, almost hanging to their feet. Lady W. Montague counted 110 tresses on one lady.—*Editor.*

† 1 Peter iii. 3. ‡ 1 Timothy ii. 9.

The apostle's remark on this subject corresponds entirely with the custom of the East, as well as with the original design of the Creator :—'Does not even nature itself teach you, that if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given her for a covering.'* The men in the East, Chardin observes, are shaved; the women nourish their hair with great fondness, which they lengthen by tresses, and tufts of silk down to the heels. But this distinction, which the inspired apostle pronounces a dictate of nature, Mr Harmer thinks was not uniformly observed, nor perhaps always regarded as of so much importance; for long hair was esteemed a beauty in Absalom. The words of the record are :†—'And when he polled his head (for it was at every year's end that he polled it; because the hair was heavy upon him, therefore he polled it), he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels, after the king's weight.'‡ That the distinction was not uniformly observed, cannot be denied; for the effeminate in all ages refused to submit to it. But it will not follow, that it rose into greater importance under the pen of the apostle; rather, it was in the eye of nature's God, of sufficient importance from the beginning, to merit the attention of his rational creatures; but it had been long forgotten, particularly among the heathen, who indulged, before their conversion to the christian faith, in every sinful pleasure, and in every effeminate and unmanly practice. The apostle, therefore, by the direction of the Spirit, interposed his authority to restore it to the rank it was intended to hold, among the decencies and proprieties of life; and to its practical utility in distinguishing between the sexes. Mr Harmer is incorrect in supposing, that the inspired historian mentions the length and weight of Absalom's hair with commendation; he describes it,

* 1 Corinthians xi. 14.

† Harmer's Observations, vol. iv. p. 326. ‡ 2 Samuel xiv. 26.

on the contrary, as the instrument of his pride and vanity; as an object of general admiration among the courtiers and people of fashion; and perhaps as one of the means by which he stole the hearts of the thoughtless and the gay, who, less favoured by nature, might be proud to purchase it for the purpose of interweaving it with their own. So proud was that worthless person of his golden locks, that he wore them as long as he could endure their weight; and when he did poll them, at certain times, his vanity prompted him to have them weighed, that it might be seen how much they excelled those of other men; and the more to expose his puerile extravagance, the weight is noted in the scriptures of truth, as amounting to 'two hundred shekels,' which, estimating the shekel at ninety-two two-fifth grains, Paris weight, is equal to a little more than two Paris pounds. These facts, the historian states in proof of Absalom's effeminacy, and to prepare his reader for adoring the retributive justice of God, in making these locks in which he gloried so much, and for which he was so greatly admired by the giddy multitude, the instrument of his destruction.*

The assistance of art was often called in to improve and enlarge the bounty of nature; and various medicaments were employed to render the hair thicker and stronger, to prevent it from falling off, and to improve its colour. For this purpose it was washed with nitre, and anointed with an unguent, consisting of a decoction of parsley-seed in wine, to which a large quantity of oil was added.† It is certain the chosen people were, at a very remote period, initiated in the art of cherishing and beautifying the hair with fragrant ointments. The head of Aaron was anointed with a precious oil, compounded after the art of the apothecary; and in proof

* See note at end of this chapter. The author has followed Michaelis, according to whose calculation the weight of Absalom's hair would be 2 lbs. 6 oz. 19 dwts. troy.—*Editor.*

† The liquid-ointment in most common use was made out of the

that they had already adopted the practice, the congregation were prohibited, under pain of being cut off, to make any other like it, after the composition of it.* The royal Psalmist alludes to the same custom in the twenty-third Psalm :—'Thou anointest my head with oil;' and in his prophetic description of the Messias, 'Thou lovest righteousness and hatest iniquity; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.'† We may infer from the direction of Solomon, that the custom had at least become general in his time :—'Let thy garments be always white, and let thy head lack no ointment.'‡

Yellow locks were held in high estimation among

best oil of olives, mixed with spices. It is distinctly mentioned by Homer, in his hymn to Vesta :—

Αιει σων πλοκαμων απολειβεται νγρον ελαιον.

'The humid oil is constantly flowing from thy tresses.' Among the Latin poets, Virgil sings of hair dropping with myrrh :—

——— 'crines
Vibratos calido ferro, myrrhaque madentes.'—*Æn.* lib. xii. l. 100.

And Horace adverts to the same custom in more than one passage:—

'Pressa tuis balanus capillis
Jamdudum apud me est.—Book iii. Ode 29.

'O Mæcenas, there has been a long while for you in my house, some rose-flowers, and expressed essence for your hair.' In another ode, congratulating his friend on his being restored to him and his country, he reminds him that he had often spent the day with him at wine, having his hair shining with the Syrian unguents crowned with flowers :—

——— 'coronatus nitentes
Malobathro Syrio capillos.'—Book ii. Ode 7.

These lines also furnish a proof of no inconsiderable force, that the ancient Romans received the custom of anointing their locks with unguents from the Syrians; and it is more than probable that the Jews learned it from the same people, if they did not receive it from their common ancestors, for the Jews are a branch of the great Syrian family.

* Exod. xxx. 32, 33. † Psalm xlv. 7.

‡ Eccl. ix. 8. [In conformity with this practice, Mary poured ointment on the head of Christ, as he sat at meat in the house of Simon; but to evince the ardour of her attachment, and the greatness of her respect, she employed ointment more costly than that in ordinary use—ointment of spikenard, and very precious. Mark xiv. 3.]—*Editor.*

the eastern nations. The sentiments of the Greeks are thus attested by Homer :—'Pallas stood behind, and seized the son of Peleus by the yellow hair.'

Στη δ' οπιθεν ξανθης δε κομης ελε Πηλειωνα.

Il. lib. i. l. 197*

But this colour seems to have been connected with the idea of youthful beauty; for when he describes a person in the full maturity of age, without any symptoms of decay, or one invested with awful majesty, he adorns him with raven locks: When Jupiter gives his assent, he nods with his black eye-brows, at which the heavens and the earth tremble :—

Ἡ και κυανεησιν επ οφρυσι νευσε Κρονιων.†

This idea was probably borrowed from the orientals; for, in the Song of Solomon, the immortal vigour and glorious majesty of the true God, the Redeemer of the church, are represented under the same figure :—'His locks are bushy, and black as a raven.'‡ His imma-

* See also Odyssey, lib. xxiii. l. 158

† Ibid. lib. xvi. l. 175. And thus Ovid :—

——— 'barba comæque,
Canitie posita, nigrum rapuere colorem.'—*Met.* lib. vii. v. 288.

‡ Song v. 11. In one instance where the black colour could not be introduced into the symbol, green, which is often a convertible term for young and fresh, is employed :—'And there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald,' Rev. iv. 3. But why was this bow which enclosed the throne of the Redeemer of an emerald green? or why did this colour predominate? but to show that it shall, unlike the thrones of earthly kings, endure for ever with undiminished splendour, immoveable stability, and ever new delights; that, in the fullest sense of the terms, 'of his kingdom and government there shall be no end.' This idea receives no little countenance from the fact, that the ancient Hindoos portrayed the chariot of the sun drawn by seven green horses, to represent, it may be presumed, the permanence, and, according to their views, the immutability of his rule.—*Maurice's Indian Antiq.* vol. ii. p. 179. The words of the spouse may refer to the same ideas of permanence and happiness :—'Also our bed is green,' Song i. 16. Green was probably the imperial colour at the court of Solomon, as it is in some courts of the East in present times.

culate purity and eternal duration are described by a different figure, which the classic bards of Greece and Rome, so far as the writer has observed, never imagined; for of these attributes they had very low ideas indeed, and by consequence were at no pains to express them by appropriate metaphors. But the sacred writers, guided by the Spirit of God, and entertaining high and awful conceptions of the divine holiness and unchangeable duration, invested Jehovah with hair 'like the pure wool.'* The whole description of the appearance, and providential government of God, is in a strain of sublimity, which leaves at an infinite distance below, the loftiest flights of Homer's muse:—'I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the judgment was set, and the books were opened.' In the same style of awful sublimity, the apostle John describes the mediatory perfections of his Lord and Saviour:—'His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow.'† From the place which the hair of the head occupies in these descriptions of human and celestial beauty, we have a right to infer the very high value put upon it by the people of the East. It is indeed one of the most common ornaments which Homer bestows upon his countrymen under the walls of Troy; the well-haired Greeks is a phrase continually in his mouth. [The high value which the orientals set on a good head of hair, will give some idea of the degree of contempt entertained for such as are bald, and, in fact, such is the ignominy attached to baldness, that it has come to be a common mode of expressing reproach, independently altogether of the ex-

* Dan. vii. 9. † Rev. i. 14.

ternal appearance of the individual. Whether Elisha was bald or not, the sacred historian has not informed us; but on the memorable occasion of his succession to the apostolic office, a party of infidel young men, who affected to disbelieve the report of his master's translation, sarcastically urged him to follow in the glorious career of Elijah; using this contemptuous expression, 'Go up, thou bald-head.' The profound contempt which these young scoffers intended to express for the venerable man, will be perceived from the following remarks of an oriental traveller:—'I was not a little astonished,' says Mr Roberts, 'when I heard for the first time a man called a bald-head, who had a large quantity of hair on his head; and I found on inquiry, that it was the severest term of ignominy and reproach. A stupid fellow is called a bald-headed dunce; and of those who are weak, it is usual to say they are bald-heads. Call a man a bald-head, which is often done, although his hair be most luxuriant, and immediately sticks or stones will be your portion.' As the epithet was in all likelihood applied to Elisha, in contempt of his mean and humble condition as a prophet, by these young men, who, in the spirit of their infidel age, were patrons of idolatry, or were indifferent to all religion, it was meet that God should vindicate the authority of his servant, and the truth of his own cause, by the appalling judgment with which he punished their blasphemy.]

After the hair is plaited and perfumed, the eastern ladies proceed to dress their heads, by tying above the lock into which they collect it, a triangular piece of linen, adorned with various figures in needle-work. This, among persons of better fashion, is covered with a *sarmah*, as they call it, which is made in the same triangular shape, of thin flexible plates of gold or silver, carefully cut through, and engraven in imitation of lace, and might therefore answer to *hasheharnim*, the moon-like ornament mentioned by the prophet in

his description of the toilette of a Jewish lady.* A handkerchief of crape, gauze, silk, or painted linen, bound close over the sarmah, and falling afterwards carelessly upon the favourite lock of hair, completes the head-dress of the Moorish ladies.† The kerchief is adjusted in the morning, and worn through the whole of the day: in this respect it differs from the veil, which is assumed as often as they go abroad, and laid aside when they return home. So elegant is this part of dress in the esteem of the orientals, that it is worn by females of every age, to heighten their personal charms. In Persia, the prophet Ezekiel informs us, the kerchief was used by women of loose character, for the purpose of seduction; for so we understand that passage in his writings:—'Woe to the women that sew pillows to all arm-holes, and make kerchiefs upon the head of every stature to hunt souls.'‡ The oriental ladies delighted in ornamenting their dress with devices of embroidery and needle-work; but it was chiefly about the neck they displayed their taste and ingenuity. To such decorations the sacred writers often allude, which clearly shows how greatly they were valued, and how much they were used. Nor were they confined to the female sex; they seem to have been equally coveted by the males; and a garment of needle-work was frequently reserved, as the most acceptable part of the spoil, for the stern and ruthless warrior. The mother of Sisera, in the fondness of her heart, allotted to her son the robe curiously wrought with vivid colours on the neck:—'To Sisera, a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needle-work, of divers colours of needle-work on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil.'§

When these operations are finished, they proceed to

* Isaiah iii. 18.

† Shaw's Travels, vol. i. p. 412. Lady M. W. Montagu's Letters, vol. i. p. 214.

‡ Ezek. xiii. 18. Taylor's Calmet, vol. iii. § Judges v. 30.

tinge the hair and edges of their eyelids with alkahol, that is, the powder of lead ore. This singular and hazardous operation is performed by 'dipping first into the powder a small wooden bodkin of the thickness of a quill, and then drawing it afterwards through the eyelids over the ball of the eye. From this statement, we have a lively image of what the prophet may be supposed to mean, "by renting the eyes" (not as we render it with *painting*, but) with lead ore. The sooty colour which is thus communicated to the eyes, is thought to add a wonderful gracefulness to persons of all complexions. The practice may be traced to a very remote period; for, besides the instance mentioned by Jeremiah, we find in the passage where Jezebel is said to have painted her face, the original words meaning that she adjusted (or set off) her eyes with the powder of pouk, or lead ore.'* The prophet Ezekiel alludes to the same practice in these words,—'Thou hast dressed thine eyes with alkahol;' which the Septuagint render εσιβιζου τους οφθαλμους σου 'thou hast dressed thine eyes with stibium.' They interpret the word pouk in the same manner; which in our version, is to paint the face; whence it is probable that pouk and cahal, or, in the Arabic form, alkahol, meant the same thing; and were names of the same mineral which the modern orientals use for dressing their eyelids. Dr Shaw says it is a rich lead ore pounded into an impalpable powder, that imparted a jetty blackness to the eyelid, and set off the whiteness of the eye to great advantage. But, in attempting to ascertain the date of this custom, we must ascend to an age long anterior to those we have mentioned; for Keren-happuc, the name which Job gave to his youngest daughter, which signifies the horn of pouk, or lead ore, seems to relate to this practice, which was, perhaps, the invention of a still remoter period.†

* 2 Kings ix. 30. Shaw. † Shaw's Trav. vol. i. p. 413. Clarke's Trav. in Palestine, vol. ii. chap. xii. p. 383.

This method of tinging the eyelids a jet black was imported into Egypt, and generally adopted by the inhabitants; for, among other curiosities that were taken out of the catacombs at Sahara relating to the Egyptian women, Dr Shaw had the opportunity of seeing a joint of the common reed, or *donax*, which contained these bodkins, and an ounce or more of this powder, agreeably to the fashions and practice of modern times.* The modern Persians continue the practice, strongly tinging their eyelashes and eyelids with antimony.†

The nose-jewel is another ornament peculiar to the East, which the Jewish females were accustomed to wear, and of which the Asiatic ladies are extremely fond.‡ It is mentioned in several parts of Scripture; thus the prophet Ezekiel:—'And I put a jewel on thy forehead,' or, as it should have been rendered, on thy nose. This ornament was one of the presents which the servant of Abraham gave to Rebecca, in the name of his master:—'I put,' said he, 'the ear-ring upon her face;' more literally, I put the ring on her nose. They wore ear-rings besides; for the household of Jacob, at his request, when they were preparing to go up to Bethel, gave him all the ear-rings which were in their ears, and he hid them under the oak which was by Shechem.§ The difference between these ornaments is clearly stated by the prophet—'I put a jewel on thy nose, and ear-rings in thine ears.' The nose-jewel, therefore, was different from the ear-ring, and actually worn by the females as an ornament in the East. This is confirmed by the testimony of Sir John Chardin, who says,

* The custom was also received by the Greeks and the Romans; for, according to Xenophon, the eye-lids of Astyages, the grandfather of Cyrus, and the principal persons of his court, were dressed with lead ore (*Xen. Cyrop.*, lib. vi. p. 19; and lib. i. p. 463); and both Dioscorides and Pliny speak of the power of stibium in dilating the eyes of women.—*Dioscor.* lib. iii. cap. 99; and *Pliny*, lib. xxxiii. cap. 6.

† Forbes' Orient. Mem. vol. i. p. 263; and Morier's Trav. vol. i. p. 61.

‡ Ibid. p. 258.

§ Gen. xxxv. 4.

'It is the custom in almost all the East, for the women to wear rings in their noses, in the left nostril, which is bored low down in the middle. These rings are of gold, and have commonly two pearls and one ruby between them, placed in the ring; I never saw a girl, or young woman in Arabia, or in all Persia, who did not wear a ring after this manner in her nostril.'* Some writers contend, that by the nose-jewel, we are to understand rings, which women attached to their forehead, and let them fall down upon their nose; but Chardin, who certainly was a diligent observer of eastern customs, no where saw this frontal ring in the East, but every where the ring in the nose. His testimony is supported by Dr Russel, who describes the women in some of the villages about Aleppo, and all the Arabs and Chinganas (a sort of gypsies), as wearing a large ring of silver or gold, through the external cartilage of their right nostril. It is worn, by the testimony of Egmont, in the same manner by the women of Egypt. The difference in the statements of these travellers is of little importance, and may be reconciled by supposing, what is not improbable, that in some eastern countries they wear the ring in the left, and in others in the right nostril; all agree that it is worn in the nose, and not upon the forehead.†

Two words are used in the Scriptures to denote these ornamental rings, *nezem* and *ogil*. Mr Harmer seems to think they properly signified ear-rings; but this is a mistake; the sacred writers use them promiscuously for the rings both of the nose and of the ears. That writer, however, is probably right in supposing that

* Harmer's Observations, vol. iv. p. 316–320.

† Some remains of this custom have been discovered among the Indians in North America, where Clark and Lewis, in their travels to the sources of the Missouri, fell in with some tribes that wore a long tapering piece of shell or bead, put through the cartilage of the nose.—*Hist. of Aleppo*, vol. i. p. 106. Egmont and Heyman, vol. ii. p. 85. See also Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. xxxiii. cap. 6. Xenophon Cyropæd. lib. i. Du Tott's Mem. vol. i. p. 192; and Thevenot's Trav. part ii. p. 94.

nezem is the name of a much smaller ring than *ogil*. Chardin observed two sorts of rings in the East; one so small and close to the ear, that there is no vacuity between them; the other so large, as to admit the fore-finger between it and the ear; these last are adorned with a ruby and a pearl on each side, strung on the ring. The circle of some of these large ear-rings is sometimes four inches in diameter, and almost two fingers thick, made of several kinds of metals, wood and horn, according to the rank of the wearer. The remark of Chardin is certainly just, that nothing can be more disagreeable to the eyes of those that are unaccustomed to the sight; for these pendants, by their weight, widen so extremely the hole of the ear, that one might put in two fingers, and stretch it more than one that never saw it would imagine. That intelligent traveller saw some of these ear-rings with figures upon them, and strange characters, which he believed were talismans or charms; but which were probably the names and symbols of their false gods. We know, from the testimony of Pliny, that rings with the images of their gods were worn by the Romans.* The Indians say they are preservatives against enchantment; upon which Chardin hazards a very probable conjecture, that the ear-rings of Jacob's family were perhaps of this kind, which might be the reason of his demanding them, that he might bury them under the oak before they went up to Bethel.†

* Nat. Hist. lib. xxxiii. cap. 6.

† Harmer's Observ. vol. iv. pp. 321, 322. [In an earlier part of this volume it was remarked, that most of the wealth of pastoral people consists in ornaments of gold and silver for personal use, and hence we find the friends of Job, when laying the foundation of that remarkable prosperity with which God blessed him in the latter part of his life, contributed such materials for personal adornment. 'Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an ear-ring of gold,' Job. xlii. 11.]—*Editor.*

Besides those ornamental rings in the nose and the ears, they wore others round the legs, which made a tinkling as they went. This custom has also descended to the present times; for Rauwolf met with a number of Arabian women on the Euphrates, whose ankles and wrists were adorned with rings, sometimes a good many together, which, moving up and down as they walked, made a great noise.* Chardin attests the existence of the same custom in Persia, in Arabia, and in other hot countries, where they commonly go without stockings, but ascribes the tinkling sound to little bells fastened to those rings. In the East Indies golden bells adorned the feet and ankles of the ladies from the earliest times; they placed them in the flowing tresses of their hair; they suspended them round their necks, and to the golden rings which they wore on their fingers, to announce their superior rank, and exact the homage which they had a right to expect from the lower orders;† and from the banks of the Indus, it is probable the custom was introduced into the other countries of Asia.‡

The Arabian females in Palestine and Syria, delight in the same ornaments, and, according to the statements of Dr Clarke, seem to claim the honour of leading the fashion. 'Their bodies are covered with a long blue shift; upon their heads they wear two handkerchiefs; one as a hood, and the other bound over it, as a fillet across the temples. Just above the right nostril they place a small button, sometimes studded with pearl, a piece of glass, or any other glittering substance; this is fastened by a plug thrust through the cartilage of the nose. Sometimes they have the

* Trav. p. 157.

† Maurice's Ind. Antiq. vol. ii. p. 339; and vol. v. p. 139.

‡ Maurice's Hist. of the East Indies, vol. ii. p. 38. Forbes' Orient. Mem. vol. i. p. 263. Buckingham's Trav. in Palestine, vol. i. p. 79.—'Most of the women,' says Mr Buckingham, 'that we saw (at Soor, or Tyre), wore also silver bells, or other appendages of precious metal, suspended by silken cords to the hair of the head.'

cartilaginous separation between the nostrils bored for a ring as large as those ordinarily used in Europe for hanging curtains; and this pendant in the upper lip covers the mouth; so that, in order to eat, it is necessary to raise it. Their faces, hands, and arms are tatooed, and covered with hideous scars; their eyelashes and eyes being always painted, or rather dirtied with some dingy black or blue powder. Their lips are dyed of a deep and dusky blue, as if they had been eating blackberries. Their teeth are jet black; their nails and fingers brick red; their wrists, as well as their ankles, are laden with large metal cinctures, studded with sharp pyramidal knobs and bits of glass. Very ponderous rings are also placed in their ears.'*

But the persons of the Assyrian ladies are elegantly clothed and scented with the richest oils and perfumes;† and it appears from the sacred Scriptures, that the Jewish females did not yield to them in the elegance of their dress, the beauty of their ornaments, and the fragrance of their essences. So pleasing to the Redeemer is the exercise of divine grace in the heart and conduct of a true believer:—'How much better is thy love than wine, and the smell of thine ointments than all spices? The smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.' ‡ When a queen was to be chosen by the king of Persia instead of Vashti, the virgins, collected at Susiana, the capital, underwent a purification of twelve months duration, to wit, 'six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours.'§

To an eastern lady, no punishment could be more

* Clarke's Trav. in Palest. vol. ii. chap. xiii. pp. 425, 426. Russel s Hist. of Aleppo, vol. i. p. 111.

† Forbes' Orient. Mem. vol. ii. p. 228. ‡ Song iv. 10, 11.

§ Esther ii. 12. The general use of such precious oils and fragrant perfumes among the ancient Romans, particularly among ladies of rank and fashion, may be inferred from these words of irgil:

'Ambrosiæque comæ divinum vertice odorem
Spiravere: pedes vestis fluxit ad imos.'—*Æn.* lib. i. l. 403.

'From her head the ambrosial locks breathed divine fragrance;

severe, none more mortifying to her delicacy, than a diseased and loathsome habit of body, instead of a beautiful skin, softened and made agreeable with all that art could devise, and all that nature, so prodigal in those countries of rich perfumes, could supply. Such was the punishment which God threatened to send upon the haughty daughters of Zion in the days of Isaiah:—'And it shall come to pass, that instead of perfume there shall be ill savour; and instead of a girdle, a rent; and instead of well set hair, baldness; and instead of a stomacher, a girding of sackcloth; and a sun-burnt skin instead of beauty.'*

The description which Pietro della Valle gives of his own wife, an Assyrian lady, born in Mesopotamia, and educated at Bagdad, whom he married in that country, will enable the reader to form a pretty distinct idea of the appearance and ornaments of an oriental lady in full dress:—'Her eye-lashes, which are long, and according to the custom of the East, dressed with stibium (as we often read in the Holy Scriptures of the Hebrew women of old; and in Zenophon of Astyages, the grandfather of Cyrus, and the Medes of that line), give a dark, and at the same time a majestic shade to the eyes.'†

'The ornaments of gold, and of jewels for the head, for the neck, for the arms, for the legs, and for the feet (for they wear rings even on their toes), are, indeed, unlike those of the Turks, carried to great excess, but not of great value; for in Bagdad, jewels of high price either are not to be had, or are not used; and they wear such only as are of little value, as turquoises,

her robe hung waving down to the ground.' In the remote age of Homer, the Greeks had already learnt the lavish use of such perfumes; for in describing Juno's dress, he represents her pouring ambrosia and other perfumes all over her body:

—— Αλειψατο δε λιπ ελαωι,
Αμβροσιω. *Il.* lib. xii. l. 197.

The maid, says Hesiod, anointed with fat oil, feels no cold.—*Opera et Dies.* l. 523. * Isa. iii. 24. † Trav. vol. i. p. 17.

small rubies, emeralds, carbuncles, garnets, pearls, and the like. My spouse dresses herself with all of them, according to their fashion ; with exception, however, of certain ugly rings, of very large size, set with jewels, which in truth, very absurdly, it is the custom to wear, fastened to one of their nostrils, like buffaloes. These nose-rings, in compliance to me, she has left off ; but I have not yet been able to prevail with her cousin and her sisters to do the same ; so fond are they of an old custom, be it ever so absurd, who have been long habituated to it.'*

[In the list of ornamental bijoux, with which oriental ladies are fond of decorating their persons, pearls rank as holding the first place. These beautiful jewels, which vary from the size of a pea to that of an ordinary pear, are sometimes round, sometimes of an oval form, and the colour most esteemed is that of pure whiteness, although some of great value are got of different hues—of a delicate blue, or an orange, like those most thought of in India, or like those in ancient Palestine, which were slightly tinged with red. Besides the tiara on the crown of the head, which, as we have already mentioned, was formed of those brilliants, they are worn in sparkling profusion all over the dress ; more particularly are they lavished on the upper part of the person. A row or two encircle the cheeks and chin ; and that the same fashion was a favourite with the ladies of Palestine, in ancient times, appears from the words of Solomon, who, describing the bride, says, 'Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels.'† Farther down, and arranged so as to lie on the swelling bosom, are several concentric circles, of the same precious gems, on which the modern ladies of the East set an equally high value with their gay predecessors in the age of our Lord ; with whom, as is well known to all acquainted with history, pearls, to use a familiar expression, were the rage. To gratify their passion

* Buckingham's Trav. in Palest. vol. i. p. 79. † Song i. 10.

for these, not only ladies of fortune, but women of the middle ranks of life, wives and daughters of subaltern officers, or tradesmen, gladly submitted to the greatest sacrifices; and consequently, as a ready market could always be depended on, many of the Jewish contemporaries of our Lord, from their vicinity to the fisheries, where the best and purest pearls were obtained, had embarked in this lucrative trade; so that the parable of the merchantman, who sold all he had, to speculate on the purchase of a goodly pearl, was in all likelihood a picture of real life, drawn from some of the resident inhabitants of Capernaum. What was meant by a goodly pearl, may be ascertained from the immense sums that were given, at that period, for some of rare beauty and size. Julius Cesar presented Servilia, the mother of Brutus, with one which cost £48,457; the pearl ear-rings of Cleopatra were estimated at £161,458; Clodius possessed one of nearly equal value; and Lollia Paullina, a celebrated character in the reign of Tiberius, wore two pearls of such immense value, that the historian describes her carrying the worth of a whole estate in her ears. Although gems like these were accessible only to a few luxurious Romans of the highest rank, such was the passionate fondness of the sex for the possession of these dazzling ornaments, that women in every rank would have parted with almost any other object, however dear, to obtain them; and when an oriental lady of the present day appears, on festive occasions, decked out in her choicest style, she never fails to show all the hereditary taste of the orientals for the display of this barbaric splendour. Where pearls are beyond their reach, chains of worn or beaten gold hang down from the crown of the head over the face on both sides; while balls of marble, glass beads of various colours, or of metal, strung upon threads, are wound in rows around the neck.*]

* Rauwolff's Travels, vol. ii. p. 191. Forbes' Orien. Mem. Beckman's Inventions.

Besides the rings, chains, and bracelets, which load the ears, the neck, and the arms of the Syrian ladies, they wear on their head a hollow silver horn which rises obliquely from their forehead, similar in shape to that worn by the other sex. This seems to have been a very ancient custom; for in the song of Hannah, when she presented her first-born, Samuel, at the temple, she exclaims, 'Mine horn is exalted in the LORD.'* [Her meaning evidently was, that the birth of this child of her prayers had filled her heart with the liveliest joy, and that from the low and despised condition of a woman unblessed with offspring,—a situation universally deprecated by Jewish women, the welcome cry of infancy in her house had enabled her at length to hold up her head with the other families in her neighbourhood. But the metaphorical language in which she expresses her lively emotions, is to be sought for in a singular peculiarity of female dress in the East, the variations of which, when known, at once explain the obscure allusion of this thanksgiving hymn. The females of both Maronites and Druses have a tin or silver horn, plain or studded with jewels, according to their conditions, worn on their heads in different positions, over which their veil is suspended. A young woman is pointed out by its being placed on the crown of her head, a married woman on the right side, a widow on the left, while those of the latter description, who have children, raise it from its oblique direction, a few inches higher, inclining towards the perpendicular. According to this custom, then, which still obtains in many parts of the East, Hannah having, through the kindness of Heaven, in answer to her fervent prayers, become the happy mother of a son, was entitled to exalt her horn; and by that slight but

* 1 Sam. ii. 1. See Buckingham's Trav. vol. i. p. 78—The Druses women of the town of Caypha wear a horn pointing backwards from the crown of their heads; but the Druses of Mount Lebanon wear a similar horn pointing forwards.—Ibid. vol. i. p. 179.

significant change in her head dress, she proclaimed wherever she went, the auspicious event that had occurred in her family, and, according to the prevailing notions, increased her personal respectability. But the horn was not confined to women alone; it was worn in certain circumstances by men also, and was an emblem of power, dignity, and command. The head dress, says Mr Bruce, of the governors of the provinces of Abyssinia, consists of a large broad fillet bound upon the forehead, and tied behind the head. In the middle of this is a horn, or a conical piece of gilt silver, about four inches long, much in the shape of our common candle extinguishers. This is called a horn, and is only used as an ornament of the nobles and great men on days of victory or public parade. The crooked manner in which they hold the neck, when this ornament is on their forehead, lest it should fall forward, affords an explanation of that passage in the Psalms, where David says to the wicked :—'Lift not up your horn on high, speak not with a stiff neck;'* it would be very difficult with a projectile so unwieldy and cumbersome, not to carry the head in a stiff and stately manner.† To this practice, various allusions are made in the Scriptures, and the description given by the Abyssinian traveller, of its being assumed as an ensign of kingly power and potent influence, throws light on the metaphorical application which the sacred writers frequently make of it :—'All the horns of the wicked will I cut off, but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.'‡ 'Mine horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of the unicorn,'§ or the rhinoceros, in which it is a powerful weapon of offence. Prosperity is indicated by this image :—'In thy favour our horn shall be exalted;' and, on the contrary, a state of calamity and disaster is described by the fall of this ensign :—'He hath cut off in his fierce anger all the horn of Israel.'‖

* Psalm lxxv. 5. † Bruce's Travels. ‡ Psalm lxxv. 10.
§ Psalm xcii. 10. ‖ Lamentations ii. 3.

Powerful kingdoms are represented under the emblem of horns. The horn of Moab is cut off; and the same image is employed by Daniel and John to represent the rise and influence of the great kingdoms, which form the burden of their prophecy.* When the false prophets described the strength of the army of Ahab, Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah, represented it in the symbolical manner of the prophets by making their horns of iron, by which he intimated that the enemy would be routed by the forces of Israel, as a defenceless individual flees before an infuriated horned bull.† In the same sense of expressing strength, Christ is styled the horn of our salvation, inasmuch we may place implicit reliance on his ability and power to save us.

[The remarks contained in the preceding pages relate generally to the leading articles of female costume in the East, as these bear on the illustration of various passages of Scripture. But, as Isaiah, when describing the gay and extravagant habits of the Hebrew ladies of his day, has given us a detailed list of the various parts of their dress, it may be interesting and useful, although some of them have been already slightly noticed, to consider them a little more minutely in the order in which they are enumerated by the prophet. The first he mentions is *the tinkling ornaments about their feet.*‡ It is probable that the ornaments alluded to were not the simple anklets or rings of gold or silver, tin or iron, which are universally worn by eastern women round their legs, although two or three of these, sliding up and down by the motion of the feet, do make a tinkling noise,—but such rings as young ladies in Persia, Arabia, and Egypt, wear about their ankles, to which are attached a number of little bells, so that every successive step keeps them ringing; and as the wearers take great delight in them, they generally walk at a rapid pace for the purpose of in-

* Daniel vii. 7; Revelations xiii. 1, 11.
† 1 Kings xxii. 11. ‡ Isaiah iii. 18.

creasing the jingle. The Jewish ladies in the time of Isaiah took a similar pride in this piece of finery, for which the prophet addresses them in the language of rebuke.

[*Cauls.*—It is not easy to determine what these were. It is probable, however, that as the hair was parted and carefully plaited into several tresses hanging down the back, the cauls were folds formed at little intervals by silken threads, with which small ornaments or coins of gold were ingeniously interwoven. These long braids, moving and ruffled by the motion of the wearer, made the gold pieces constantly clink together, which was reckoned agreeable.

Round tires like the moon.—These were slender frames made of a material like pasteboard, in the form of a crescent, and bestudded with pearls or other jewels of various colours, worn on the front or at the side of the head-dress.

Chains.—They were the twisted chains of gold that were wound in large rows round the neck, and rested on the bosom, exhibiting, as they often do still, as exquisite workmanship as any European goldsmith can produce.

Bracelets.—Ornaments to encircle the wrist, which, among the orientals, are more like manacles than bracelets. They are flat and inclined to oval or semicircular where they open to introduce the hand. They consist, among the better classes, of mother-of-pearl or gold and silver, the latter of which is the most common; but the poorer women wear them of horn, copper, glass, and various other materials of a cheap and mean description, and the arm, from the elbow downwards, is covered with them. Those which were presented by Eliezer to Rebecca were of gold, and, as they were ten shekels in weight, must have been of great value.

Mufflers.—A particular variety of the veils already described.

Bonnets.—Tires, which sat upon the crown of the head like a skull-cap, but of a most elegant appearance, consisting of little circles of thin beaten-gold, adorned with emeralds and other precious stones, and joined to the caul. These are spoken of as ornaments of grace,* and beautiful crowns for the head.

Ornaments for the legs.—The common anklets, without bells.

Head-bands.—Fillets or girdles that were bound around the head, serving to fasten the several parts of the head-dress. They were of the richest texture, and sparkled with rubies and pearls.

Tablets.—Perfume boxes suspended by a necklace to the waist.

Ear-rings.—Rings worn at the side of the head in the lobe of the ears, or sometimes attached to them by a silken chain, which lets them rest on the left shoulder. They were engraven with images of serpents, and served as they do still, rather the purpose of amulets or charms than ornaments.

Rings.—Worn on the first, third, and fourth fingers, and the corresponding toes.

Nose-jewels.—Large rings passing through the septum of the nose, and nearly touching the upper lip.

Changeable suits of apparel.—Eastern ladies have a great pride in possessing immense wardrobes. Their fashions never altering, they soon accumulate a vast variety of dresses, for it frequently happens that they have all the wearing apparel belonging to their mothers and grandmothers; and on particular occasions they deck themselves out in a succession of different dresses in one night.

The Mantles.—Large robes of an elegant make, worn over their gowns by the ladies at home.

Wimples.—Hoods of fine linen, thrown over the head, and covering the whole of the upper part of the person.

* Prov. i. 9. Ezekiel xvi. 12.

Crisping-pins.—Beautifully ornamented purses made of silk, and attached to the girdles.

Glasses.—Mirrors made of burnished metal, consisting of several small pieces about an inch square, and which women in the East constantly carry about with them wherever they are, even when engaged in their domestic duties. They were highly polished; but, in comparison of the materials our mirrors are made of, still answer Paul's description of seeing through a glass, darkly.

Fine Linen.—Shirts, then very rare, and considered articles of extravagant luxury.

Hoods.—Folds of shawls loosely thrown around the head, and falling down the back, so that the corners are neatly brought round to cover the bosom.

Veils.—The various veils thrown over the head and concealing the features, sometimes the entire face, sometimes leaving one eye exposed, and at other times enveloping only the under part of the face below the nose.

Stomacher.—It is difficult to discribe this article of dress. But the probability is, that it was a girdle formed of a shawl loosely folded, and the corners of which hung negligently down.

Girdles.—They were fastened round the waist by a clasp of elaborate and elegant workmanship; sometimes set round with jewels, arranged in fanciful forms, such as the bride's described in the Song, which was made in the shape of a wine goblet; and it is this that is meant by the expression, 'Thy navel (or clasp) is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor.'

Drawers.—It is these that are meant by the expression, 'The joints of thy thighs are like jewels;' which will be still better understood by the following description of those worn by eastern ladies in the present day:—'The first part of my dress,' says Lady Montague, 'is a pair of drawers, very full, that reaches to my shoes, and conceals the legs much more modestly

than your petticoats. They are of a thin rose-coloured damask, brocaded with silver flowers. Over my drawers hangs my smock, of fine white silk gauze, edged with embroidery.'

[The following description of a Mogul lady, in full dress, bears so close a resemblance to the rich and splendid costumes of the Hebrew women in the days of Isaiah, that she might have sat for the picture drawn by the prophet; and we subjoin it as forming an interesting combination, in a modern oriental female, of the particulars enumerated in the preceding pages :— 'Her age did not exceed fifteen; her form was perfect, her features regular, and her large antelope eyes of a brilliant lustre. Although fairer than the generality of Indian females, neither the rose nor the lily adorned her complexion; yet the brunette tint rather enriched than impaired the softness and delicacy of her skin; and I hastily sketched her as a well dressed Mogul. Her drawers of green satin, flowered with gold, were seen under a chemise of transparent gauze, reaching to her slippers, richly embroidered; a vest of pale blue satin, edged with gold, sat close to her shape, which an upper robe of striped silver muslin, full and flowing, displayed to great advantage; a netted veil of crimson silk, flowered with silver, fell carelessly over her long braided hair, combed smooth, and divided from the forehead, where a cluster of jewels was fastened by strings of seed-pearl; her ear-rings were large and handsome; that in her nose, according to our ideas of ornament, less becoming; but the Asiatic ladies are extremely fond of the nose-jewel. A necklace, in intermingled rows of pearl and gold, covered her bosom, and several strings of large pearls were suspended from an embroidered girdle set with diamonds; bracelets of gold and coral reached from the wrist to the elbow; golden chains encircled her ankles, and all her toes and fingers were adorned with valuable rings. Like most of the oriental females, of all religions, her eyes were

tinged by a black circle, formed with the powder of antimony, which produces a refreshing coolness, gives the eye an additional lustre, and is thought to be a general improvement to Asiatic beauty.'*

[In the foregoing inventory of articles, which Isaiah has enumerated as composing the female toilet in his day, a conspicuous place is assigned to changeable suits of apparel, which the reader, who forms his ideas upon the standard of European habits, is apt to suppose, means nothing more than a few changes of raiment necessary for the purposes of comfort and cleanliness, or for fitting one to appear with becoming neatness in society. A little reflection, however, will serve to convince him, that in the possession of so moderate a stock of clothing as is requisite for these ends, and as the ordinary exercise of economy in all, except the lowest conditions of life, can easily procure, there was nothing to call down the weight of the prophet's censure on his countrywomen; and he will be led to think that their prevailing fashion, which had been carried so far as to become a vice, must have been marked by a degree of extravagance and love of show, far greater than the simple words seem to imply. The fact is, that the passion for dress which, in all ages, has reigned so powerfully in the breast of oriental women, extends fully as much to variety, as we have shown, it does to splendour. The adornment of their persons is their chief business, and forms the great charm by which their monotonous life is enlivened. The motive that reconciles them to the cares and slavery of the married state is the prospect of the increased facilities they will obtain for gratifying their taste for finery; and the way they take to impress strangers with an idea of their wealth, is by exhibiting the contents of an extensive wardrobe. With us, women of the highest rank and fortune, having once dressed themselves in the style agreeable to their fancy or means, retain during

* Forbes' Oriental Memoirs.

their stay, the holiday garb in which they enter a company; and let the occasion be ever so festive, or the assembly ever so grand and brilliant, they never dream of parading their opulence, or suppose it likely to increase their respectability, or set off their beauty to advantage, by appearing in a succession of different dresses, each surpassing the other in splendour and richness. But it is far otherwise with ladies in the East, whose whole pride and pleasure consists in external decorations, and who often leave the room, and the company they are with, a dozen times in an evening, returning again at intervals, each time dressed in different and more elegant attire. 'Whatever other fashions,' says a recent traveller, 'may have changed in the East, and very few have ever varied, there is still one stationary, the sight of which carries us back to the remotest antiquity: I mean this fashion of splendid dresses. I had a fine specimen of it this evening in the lady of the house. She produced from her wardrobe at least ten heavy outer garments, coats of many colours, embroidered and spangled with gold and silver and flowers. There were some of them as old as the date of her marriage, and some of them older. These are only worn on great festivals, as Christmas, Easter, &c. when she sits in state to receive her friends, and hand them a cup of coffee and a pipe to them. It is curious, however, to see how her splendid dresses are contrasted with her humble daily occupations, for in the ordinary duties of the house, she is to be found sweeping out the kitchen, boiling the pot, &c., and she eats her meals when her husband and his friends have finished, sitting on the ground with her children and servants at the palace door; and such, generally, is the condition of females in eastern countries. She wears an infinity of braids, which hang down all the length of her back, and terminate in gold sequins; which, together with those she wears on her head, may be worth from five to ten pounds sterling.

I was weary with her showing me them, at which she seemed surprised.'*

[This love of splendour and variety of dress is as rife in the towns and villages of Palestine, and other eastern countries, as it is in London or Paris. To have a large assortment of elegant raiment, is every where the *ne plus ultra* of female ambition. The dress of eastern gentlemen differs chiefly, as may be supposed, from that of ordinary men, in the superior fineness and costliness of the materials; and, as a detailed description has already been given in an earlier part of this chapter, we shall now take notice only of those articles of personal adornment, which are worn by people of rank and opulence. Besides the staff, which every one carries along with him, he has a signet or seal suspended from his neck over his breast, having his name engraven on it, along with some appropriate device, or more frequently a miniature impression of some favourite object, as appears from the fond language of the spouse, 'Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm.'† The latter clause refers to a variety of this practice preferred by ladies, who wear such little portraits upon a broad jewel, fastened to the forearm immediately below the shoulder. A more common ornament in use among men of rank is a ring upon one of the fingers of their right hand, of the prevalence of which, in the days of our Lord, we find traces in the generous welcome given to the returning prodigal;‡ and, in the reproof addressed by the apostle James to some members of the primitive church for their unbecoming and unchristian neglect of the poor, while they paid ready deference to those with gold rings.§ When the seal upon the right breast is not worn, the impressions usually engraven upon it are made upon a jewel in the ring, to which practice, a very striking reference is made by Jeremiah:—'As I live, saith the

* Jowett's Christian Researches.
† Song viii. 6.
‡ Luke xv. 22.
§ James ii. 2.

Lord, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee hence;'* and also by Haggai, 'In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord; and *I will make thee as a signet:* for I have chosen thee.'†

[But of all parts of their dress, by far the greatest care and attention is lavished upon the beard, which, being the appropriate appendage of dignity and manhood, is as highly prized by the men, as their long flowing tresses are by the ladies. The possession of a long and bushy beard, reaching down to the breast, adds not a little to the respectability of the person who owns it, whereas the want of a beard draws down the greatest contempt as a mark of servility and degradation. Belzoni tells us of one of the Pacha's buffoons, who, in a frolic, having shaven his beard, was driven away from his own door by the females of his house, as one to be universally shunned; and Niebuhr mentions a person who, having, in a fit of intoxication, taken off his beard, banished himself for life, as he could not bear up under the infamy of his conduct, at home; and D'Arvieux relates a remarkable anecdote of an Arab, who, being wounded in the jaw, preferred endangering his life rather than submit to an operation which required the removal of his beard. In short, the language of common and daily life affords constant evidence of the high value set upon a beard in the East. It is considered the very emblem of honesty and virtue. 'Only look at that beard,' they are accustomed to say, 'the very sight of it may persuade you that its owner is an honest man;' for 'Shave off your beard,' is their style of reproving any one who has been guilty of a mean or wrong action; and when they express their best wishes for one's welfare, it is usually done by saying, 'May God preserve your beard!' When such extraordinary homage is

* Jeremiah xxii. 24. † Haggai ii. 23.

attached to the possession of a beard, it may be supposed that a corresponding care will be taken to set it off to advantage, and, accordingly, to trim, to curl, and anoint it with oil and perfume is an indispensable part of their daily dress. 'It is,' says Morier, 'almost universally dyed black, by an operation not very pleasant, and necessary to be repeated generally once a fortnight. It is always performed in the hot bath, where the hair being well saturated takes the colour better. A thick paste is first made, which is loosely plastered over the beard, and which, after remaining an hour, is all completely washed off, and leaves the hair of a very strong orange colour. After this a thick paste is made of the leaf of the indigo, which has previously been pounded to a very fine powder, and of this also a layer is put upon the beard; but this second process to be successful requires two hours. When the indigo is at last washed off, the beard is of very dark bottle green, and becomes a jet only when it has met the air for twenty-four hours. Some, indeed, are content with the orange colour; others, more fastidious, prefer a beard quite blue. The people of Bokhara are famous for their blue beard.'* It was by some elaborate process of this kind that the great in ancient Palestine, as we learn from the history of Mephibosheth, trimmed their beards.†

[While the orientals thus carefully arrange and encourage the growth of their beards, they cut off all the hair of their heads, as has been already said, except one lock. But the ancient Hebrews allowed the hair of their heads to grow long and bushy, and hang in luxuriant ringlets so long as they were in a state of minority; wearing it, however, after they attained the age of manhood, universally short;‡ and as theirs was

* Second Journey, p. 274. † 2 Sam. xix. 24.

‡ This circumstance has led some writers to suppose, that it might be on the occasion of Absalom's attaining 'the ends of the days,' viz. of his minority, that that handsome but profligate young prince polled his hair.

in common with that of most eastern countries, generally black, the appearance of an old man with white hairs among young persons is compared to the almond-tree, which blossoms early in spring, while all other trees are dark and without foliage.

[The dress of the three young companions of Daniel appears to have been different from that in common use, either among the Jews or throughout the East; and as it is almost certain, that, holding as they did high stations under the Chaldean government, they would be dressed in appropriate robes of office, or at least in the garb worn by people of rank and dignity, we may learn what the style of their garments was, from the description which Herodotus has given of the Babylonian dress, about a hundred years after Daniel. He states it to have consisted of a linen shirt, fitting close to the body, and reaching down to the feet; above this was a tunic of wool, and their upper garments consisted of a short white cloak; while their heads were protected by a turban. This is the identical style of clothing in which the three young friends were habited, when they were seized and thrown into the fiery furnace. 'Then these three men were bound in their cloaks, their turbans, their upper woollen tunics, and their under linen tunics;' and it is worthy of remark, that their several articles of dress, consisting of such combustible materials, have been specified by the sacred historian, apparently with the view of displaying the magnitude of the miracle, by which they were preserved even from the smell of fire.

[Every one acquainted with the habits of the Romans in the days of our Lord, knows that, from their extensive possessions in the East, whither numbers of their great men went out, from year to year, to push their fortunes, that luxurious age had imported a taste for Asiatic magnificence; and that consequently the rich stuffs of Babylon, and the splendid dyes of Tyre, found in Italy and at Rome a better market than ever they

could boast of, even in oriental countries. The most fashionable dress patronized by the masters of the world, consisted of a linen, or rather a fine cotton tunic, fitting closely to the body, over which was thrown a robe of purple, of a dark-blood or violet colour, that reached, in loose flowing drapery, down to the feet. The classical reader will remember the fine portrait Cicero has drawn of the luxurious Verres, in his robes of purple and fine linen. In short, in innumerable passages of the classical writers of the period, we find those materials mentioned as the most conspicuous in every description of a superb and elegant costume ; and our Lord, in the imaginary story of the rich man and Lazarus, evidently gave, in the description of Dives, a picture of the nobility or gentry of the day.

[A very curious custom prevails in many parts of the East, of staining the nails, and frequently the entire hands and feet, with a deep yellow colour, which is obtained from an odoriferous plant called camphire, which was procured from Egypt and India ; although, from an incidental allusion in the Song of Solomon, a few specimens of this exotic seem to have been raised in the vineyards of Engeddi.* The leaves being dried completely in the sun, and ground to powder, were mixed with a little water, forming a paste, which at night was fastened upon the hands and feet ; and on removing it in the morning, an orange tinge was impressed upon the parts, which the eastern people have always admired. It seems to be a practice of venerable antiquity, as some mummies have been found with their nails thus coloured ; and whatever may have been the origin,—whether it proceeded from a fondness for the glaring dye, or whether, as Bruce states, it is useful as an astringent, in preserving the hands and feet from unpleasant perspiration,—it is well known to be one of those favourite customs, which never are allowed to fall into desuetude in the East. Ladies are particular-

* Song i. 14.

ly fond of this rouge ; but that the other sex also observed it, appears from the history of Mephibosheth, who showed his sorrow for David's flight, during Absalom's rebellion, by not dressing (properly, not staining) his feet.*

[Nor is the care of the person, among people of high rank in the East, confined to those frequent applications of perfume and dyes. Their ideas of beauty require a certain measure of plumpness, as an indispensable attribute of a well-conditioned person, equally removed from the opposite extremes of leanness and embonpoint ; and, accordingly, in some of the noble and royal harems, an eunuch is specially invested with the office of inspecting, from time to time, the fair inmates, and ascertaining how far they retain conformity to the approved standard. For this purpose, he carries, as his emblem and implement of office, an elastic girdle, by passing which round the waist of each of the tenants of the seraglio, he can discover whether she is of the requisite dimensions ; and in proportion as she is found exceeding or falling short of this gauge of the person, her diet is regulated in quantity and quality for the future. In some places, this object is attained, not by measurement, but by the application of scales ; a custom however which is not exclusively used in respect of ladies, as we learn that some eastern kings are weighed once a year, by order of their physicians, who form their opinion, by this means, of the state of their health. To this practice, which perhaps obtained in the court of Assyria, there is doubtless an allusion in the memorable words inscribed upon the wall, ' Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting.'

[Men of rank are as strongly influenced by the passion for a variety of sumptuous and splendid habits as the ladies, and the wardrobes and cabinets that grace the houses of the rich, are valued far less as pieces of furniture than for the much prized stock they contain.

* 2 Sam. xix. 24.

The treasures of this kind, amassed in some houses, seem more like what might be expected in a cloth merchant's shop than in a private family.* It was this that made it so practicable and easy for Rebecca to accomplish her designs, when, to carry her stratagem into effect, she clothed her favourite son in the 'goodly raiment of Esau.' It was this that rendered it so natural, and, on the spur of the moment, within his power, for Jonathan to strip himself of his princely cloak and outer garments, and dress with them the shoulders of his friend David. It is this that has induced princes and great men to make choice of costly garments as appropriate presents for those they wish to honour, and it is the same wide and loose style of clothing which has produced a habit of mind found universally prevailing in the domestic economy of the East,—the desire of preserving, with the greatest care, the fine and magnificent dresses belonging to their ancestors, as well as of increasing these treasures by new ones of their own. Such a multitude of garments they never expect nor intend to wear themselves; but as the great and opulent amongst us take pride in having a library that contains a collection of rare, elegantly bound, and valuable books, as a mark of their wealth and taste; so men of rank in the East are prompted by the same motives to lay up treasures of cloth, of fine texture and splendid colours, with the view of displaying their magnificence, or making occasional presents of them to their friends; while the rest, they know, will be transmitted from one generation to another, heirlooms of their

* The classical reader will remember the instance of Lucullus, who, from long residence in the East, had acquired the Asiatic taste, and on one occasion furnished the manager of a Roman theatre with 5000 suits of the kind required. And a modern Persian poet was found, at his death, to have possessed a hundred complete suits of clothes, two hundred shirts, and five hundred turbans. Rich families in Persia, indeed, often have tailors resident in their house as regular servants of the household. Jehu ordered 400 vests for the priests of Baal; and the prodigal son was arrayed on a moment's notice with the richest robe in the collection.——*Editor.*

family and children. In forming such immense collections, they have no apprehensions of their ever becoming unsuitable for use, either from any variations of fashion, or from the age and altered form of the wearer. The stability of their customs, and the wide open flowing style of the oriental costume, render them always available, and garments, made a century ago, and worn in the present day, appear no more antiquated,—are every way as well adapted to the circumstances of time and place, as they were when they first came from the hands of the tailor. One risk, however, and it is a great one, those who lay up treasures of this kind are exposed to, which the utmost precautions are sometimes ineffectual to prevent. Besides rust or mouldiness, which is almost inseparable from mud-built houses, and which is exceedingly injurious to every thing affected by it, especially any kind of apparel, their clothes are liable to sustain great damage from the attacks of moths, which, destructive as they are every where in warm countries, commit the most rapid and almost incredible ravages where they alight.* A recent traveller in Palestine tells us, that he was so annoyed by a species of moth which abounded in a particular part of the country, that his coat in a short time was reduced to tatters. Forbes relates an anecdote of a young man who, having reached home late in the evening from a journey, his trunk, containing his shirts, jackets, and trousers, was left standing on the

* Moths, whether in the maggot, or the papilio (the winged state), swarm in myriads, and grow to a much greater size in southern latitudes than with us. But under the general term moths, which comprehends a very wide and numerous family, are no doubt included a variety of flies, which in those regions are exceedingly annoying to the person, and ruinous to property, as well as the termites, or white ants, as they are often though improperly called; and as Judea, in common with other eastern countries, abounded with these, it is more than likely, as our Lord's illustrations were generally borrowed from subjects of common and every day life, that in this phraseology of the precept, 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt,' he was appealing to the knowledge and experience of his audience.—*Editor.*

floor of the lobby all night. The next day, when it was opened, the most extraordinary change had taken place upon the contents, every article of clothing when held up presenting the appearance of lace, and being pierced with innumerable holes; each insect working upwards had wrought out for itself a covered way to the top, so that, though the garments retained their original shape, there could not be found one piece of cloth as large as a sixpence in the whole trunk.'* 'I met with an incident,' says another traveller, 'which excited my astonishment. My effects were deposited in a cabinet, which stood in my apartment, and being one day desirous of taking out something, I discovered in it an innumerable multitude of termites, or white ants, as they are sometimes, though improperly, called. When I examined the different articles, I observed that these little animals had perforated my clothes in a thousand places, and in particular gnawed to pieces my girdle, my shawl, and my shoes. They were moving in columns behind one another; and each carried away in its mouth a fragment of my effects, which were more than half destroyed.'

[The allusion, then, contained in the precept above quoted, to the great damage done by those tiny but wholesale plunderers, must have given to the words of Christ a point and an emphatic import, which, however it is lost on ordinary readers amongst us, an oriental audience thoroughly understood and felt. Observations on the frailty of earthly possessions of every kind, and the short-lived tenure by which we hold them, are suited to all the varieties of human condition; and as there is not a spot where man lives, and prosecutes his labours of industry, but he is in danger of being drawn too closely to them, and of placing his chief happiness and dependence upon

* The same writer mentions the instance of a lady who, having spent some months in the country, on returning to her apartments in the town, found a large chest filled with shawls, muslins, and various other articles, entirely destroyed by those voracious insects.—*Editor.*

them, the admonition to beware of setting his affections on the world, or the things of the world, can no where be out of place when founded on general views of the wasting influence of time, and the uncertain accidents that affect the stability or the existence of all things belonging to man. A christian teacher, however, who should address an assembly of Britons on this common, but, alas, too much forgotten topic of interest, would never, in our country, have thought of delivering his precepts in the form and by the persuasives employed by Christ. Among the treasures which the people of this commercial and highly enlightened land lay up, and their avidity in amassing which renders admonitions of this moral strain as necessary for their direction as that of the audience to whom the precept was originally addressed, he would not assign the chief and prominent place to articles of bodily attire, as the objects on which they placed their greatest pride and pleasure; still less would we expect to find him appealing to the sudden and sweeping ravages of the moth on this kind of property as the most striking and weighty argument he could urge in support of his homily. But framed as our Lord's discourse was for the immediate benefit of people living in a quarter of the world where the prevailing manners led them 'to prepare raiment as the clay,'* and whose experience taught them that there was no enemy to clothing so formidable as the moth, the phraseology of this precept was the most appropriate and memorable that could have been used; and, in the arrangement, precedence is with equal propriety given to the moth, inasmuch as, while damp may occasionally cover the contents of chests and cabinets with mouldiness, and destroy their texture; while, in a corrupt and disordered state of society, like that of Palestine in the age of our Lord, and like that of most eastern countries in all periods, thieves

* Job xxvii. 16.

may at times break through and steal, the climate and country made it certain that wearing apparel was a species of treasure which at all times, and with alarming rapidity, the moth was liable to corrupt.

[The wide and loose style of clothing in use among the orientals is very convenient for their peculiar attitude in resting. Every one knows that, as chairs are unknown, they squat themselves down, where divans are within reach, on the ground; spreading a carpet or mat beneath them, if they have one, but as often sitting down on the bare earth, without any protection from the dust at all. In this way they sit for hours in groups, engaged in familar talk, or in total listlessness, for they have no idea of taking exercise, or walking when they are not compelled; so that, when two or three meet together, they forthwith sit down on the ground, drawing their feet close towards them, and concealing those extremities with their clothes. This is invariably done, as it is reckoned as a mark of becoming propriety and respect to others, never to show the feet when seated; and, accordingly, in the sublime description which Isaiah has given of the appearance of the Lord Jehovah in the character of a majestic and glorious king, one of the circumstances taken notice of in the picture is, that 'He covered his feet.'* By this posture on the bare ground, the garments must be inevitably soiled; and it has been often remarked as a curious trait of eastern manners, that, in a circle of two or three natives seated on the earth, one and then another will be seen starting up to his feet, and, after brushing off the dust from his clothes, again resume his place. Jowett, who took great pleasure in comparing

* Isaiah vi. 2. After Isaiah's vision of the Lord's glory referred to in the text, he describes himself as exclaiming, 'Woe is me, I am undone! for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of Hosts,' Isaiah vi. 5. It is probable that there is here an allusion to a custom prevalent in some of the despotic kingdoms of the East, where, as Sir John Chardin tells us, whenever the sovereign shews himself, every one casts his eyes on the earth, and is not permitted to look on the king.—*Editor.*

the manners of the East with Scriptural allusions, was struck with the light which this practice reflected on the attitude in which Jeremiah has placed the personified daughter of Zion, in the time of her desolation; and indeed every reader must perceive that it gives a sense to the passage extremely natural:—'Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem.'* 'It is no uncommon thing,' says that traveller, 'to see an individual, or company of individuals, even when very well dressed, sitting, with their feet drawn under them, upon the bare earth, for they prefer the ground, passing whole hours in idle conversation. A person of rank in the East often sits down upon the ground with his attendants about him. In the heat of summer, it is pleasant to see them while away their time in this manner, under the shade of trees. Richly adorned females, as well as men, may often be seen thus amusing themselves. At first sitting down, they choose their place, yet the flowing dress by degrees gathers up the dust; they from time to time arise, adjust themselves, shake off the dust, and then sit down again. The captive daughter of Zion, therefore, brought down to the dust of suffering and oppression, is commanded to arise, and shake herself from that dust, and, with grace and dignity, and composure and security, to sit down, and to take, as it were, her seat again, and her rank, amid the company of the nations of the earth, which had before afflicted and trampled on her.'†

[Having now described in detail all the various parts of the dress worn by orientals in the house, at their ordinary employments, and when equipped for appearing abroad, it remains only to make a few concluding observations on garbs of office, so far as is necessary to afford illustrations of scripture. A camel's hair cloak was, as already stated, the professional habit of the prophets; and, although it consisted of a very coarse material, retained the shaggy fur of nature, and intrin-

* Isaiah lii. 2. † Christian Researches, p. 282.

sically had little either of beauty or value to recommend it, the mantle of an eminent leader of the prophets, such as Elijah, was highly prized, being supposed to possess some sacred and mysterious properties, by which the person on whom it was bestowed, inherited the spirit and power of its original owner. A persuasion of this kind has always prevailed widely in eastern countries; and, accordingly, the common way of installing an individual into the highest offices of the priesthood, is by investing him with the official robe, no matter however frail and tattered, that was worn by his predecessor. In Persia, the teachers of the sooffees or priests, regard a sacred mantle as the emblem of their spiritual authority, and when one dies, he bequeaths his old and worn out cloak to some favourite or distinguished pupil, who, by that act, is recognized as his legitimate successor, as well as heir to the personal qualities and endowments of his master. It is by the same ceremony that the head Brahmins in India obtain the character and station of priests,—a yellow cloak being thrown over their shoulders, which is kept tight round the waist by a sacred ribbon; and it appears, that, at whatever period, and through whatever channel introduced, the same ideas were entertained by the people of Israel, with respect to the observance and the virtue of this traditionary usage,—since, at the splendid close of Elijah's ministry, that master in Israel, at the moment of his translation, dropped his mantle into the arms of his faithful servant Elisha, who was thenceforth acknowledged throughout the land as the future head and leader of the schools of the prophets.

[The robes of civil office were very different, and, as we learn from the stories of Joseph and Daniel, were of the most splendid description. On ordinary occasions, it is probable that the dress of the high functionaries of state may not be very different from that of a private gentleman in the East. But at his in-

stallation, and on great or public occasions, they were arrayed in tunics of the finest linen, with a cloak of scarlet brocade, that covered the whole person, embroidered in letters of gold lace, with various appropriate emblems of power. This superb raiment, which is sent from the palace of the sovereign to the man whom he delights to honour, is preserved with the greatest care, not only as an high token of the prince's favour, but as one of the ordinary badges of office. Besides this, they wore a chain of gold round their neck, and on their hand or wrist an immense gold ring, with a signet containing the royal initials and arms, the use of which is indispensable to give weight and authority to all their proceedings. The bestowal of this important ring, which, to pay a higher compliment to the favourite, is usually taken directly from the hand of the sovereign himself, is equivalent to raising one to the rank of vizier or prime minister; and, accordingly, on the occasion of Joseph's elevation to the rank of highest subject in Egypt, Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand. The possession of it creates the minister the representative of majesty, and when it is set to any proclamation or public document, it stamps all his councils and proceedings with the force of royal authority. A functionary of this exalted rank and extensive power, is in all countries looked up to with respect and homage. But, in eastern countries, it is scarcely possible to describe the dignity that is attached to the office. It is far superior to that of any minister known in any cabinet of Europe; for, in fact, as Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'only on the throne will I be greater than thou.' The vizier differs from the king but in name, as the royal signet which he carries constantly about with him, empowers him, without waiting for instructions, to do every thing according to his own will, and his word is law to all the officers of the kingdom, however high their character, or powerful their situation may

otherwise be. Under the character of such a supreme officer, the prophetic author of the Revelations represents the angel, whom he saw ascending from the East, having the seal of the living God; and who cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, to suspend their work for a time. The dignified appearance of this angel, together with his possession of the seal of heaven, bespoke him to be that exalted personage to whom 'all power is committed both in heaven and on earth,'—his authoritative orders to the other angels, evinced the superiority of his character, and the absolute power as well as the extent of his commission—and the instantaneous as well as profound obedience which, at the remotest boundaries of the earth, was yielded to his commands, the moment he displayed himself as the keeper of the great seal—the representative of divine Majesty —plainly determines the person referred to in this symbolical vision, to have been our 'Lord of all.'

[Among the regalia mentioned in scripture as adorning the persons of eastern princes, the crown, of course, holds the first place. In primitive ages, this badge of the regal office was nothing more than a simple wreath formed of the leaves of ivy or laurel, which, however, when diadems of more precious materials were introduced at a more advanced stage of society, ceased to be the distinction of royalty, and were worn only on festal occasions as garlands to grace the brow of the rulers of banquets. In process of time, crowns of metal came to be used, formed to embrace the temples in the manner of a garland, with a horn projecting from the forehead as the emblem of power. These served the warrior kings of ancient days as helmets; and, accordingly, we read of Saul wearing his diadem at the fatal battle of Gilboa.* At a still later period, the tiara, or crown of gold and precious stones, was introduced, and, in eastern countries, as well as in other

* 2 Samuel i. 10.

quarters of the world, has ever since continued to be the characteristic ensign of royalty,—some of the jewels that compose the diadems of more than one oriental monarch being of immense value.* But while crowns, that encircle the temples, are worn on private and ordinary occasions by eastern monarchs, many of them have colossal crowns, surmounting their thrones when they appear in state, which it would require the head and shoulders of an Atlas to bear. These, therefore, instead of being placed upon, are supported at a respectable elevation above, the head of the monarch, from a canopy overhanging the royal divan. And, accordingly, Sir William Ousely, who has described the Persian court with the most minute accuracy, says, 'We did not find any two monarchs of this country wearing crowns exactly alike; each, probably, distinguished himself by choosing one of a particular fashion, whilst the state crown of Persia, which descended through many generations, from its unwieldy form and excessive weight, was worn only on solemn occasions, and, even then, was suspended over the royal shrine with chains of gold.'† Of such gigantic magnitude seems to have been that diadem which fell into David's hands at the siege of Rabbah, as the historian says, the conqueror 'took the crown of their king from off his head, and found it to weigh a talent of gold.'‡

[Bracelets rank next in order of the royal ornaments, and that they formed a part of the regalia is evident from their being the ensigns brought to David by the Amalekite who put an end to the unfortunate Saul, as a proof that the royal honours had by that event devolved upon him;§ and also from

* A pear-shaped pearl belonging to the crown of the king of Persia is estimated at £100,000.—*Editor.*

† Something similar was exhibited by the Roman prætors, who, according to Juvenal, had a crown hung over their heads, on great occasions, by a slave.—*Editor.*

‡ 1 Chron. xx. 2. A talent weighs about 125 lbs.—*Editor.*

§ 2 Sam. i. 10.

several incidents in the modern history of the East, in which tributary princes were acknowledged in their kingdoms by a present of bracelets from their liege lord. But ornaments of this kind were not bracelets properly so called, but armlets, or bands of jewels adapted to the arms above the elbow. These it was the peculiar prerogative of kings to wear,—all inferior persons being prohibited from assuming them ; and, indeed, the immense rarity and value of the stones that sparkled in those armlets, rendered all attempts at imitation hopeless. That which encircles the right arm of the king of Persia, called 'the crown of the moon,' contains one stone weighing 146 carats, while that on the left, called 'the sea of light,' is enriched with a diamond which is said not to be equalled in the world.

[The sceptre is the third symbol of royal authority, and at first seems to have been simply a wooden staff, in length like a shepherd's rod, from which, as shepherds exhibited the earliest examples of rule, it is probable the royal sceptres were borrowed. Additional dignity was lent to them by their being studded with nails of gold ; and it has been supposed that the rods borne constantly in the hands of Moses and Aaron, were similar ensigns of their official power. Afterwards the sceptres of kings came to consist of harder and more durable materials than wood ; and to the introduction of these, allusions are made in two passages of Scripture : the first is in the Psalms, where, in reference to the triumphant success of our Mediatorial King over the enemies of his church, it is said, 'Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron ;'* and the second occurs in the prophecies of Ezekiel, where mention is made of 'strong rods for the sceptres of them that rule.'† To the place of sceptres formed of the baser metals, rods tipped with a sharp steel point succeeded ; and, accordingly, the sceptre of Saul seems to have been a military spear.‡ Golden sceptres, however, were more suited to the pomp and splendour that

* Psalm ii. 9. † Ezekiel xix. 11. ‡ 1 Sam. xxii. 6.

reign in courts, and hence Ahasuerus, whose palace, like that of the monarchs of Persia, ever since, has delighted in barbaric luxury and magnificence, a golden sceptre bespoke at once the power and the riches of the king. It is probable, however, that his sceptre was only gilt, or studded with gold nails.*

[In addition to the usual splendour which the crown, the sceptre, and the bracelets impart to royalty, eastern princes resort to a mode of displaying their glory peculiar to themselves. Despotism being the fundamental principle of their government, and their will absolute law, the establishment of their authority is founded on the principle of fear; and as it is, therefore, of the utmost importance to the continuance of their power to inspire the popular mind with sentiments of profound veneration and respect for the person of majesty, they adopt the prudent policy of coming forth on grand festivals from the depths of their seclusion, and gratifying their subjects with an exhibition of royalty in its most dazzling forms. At those times, as the spectacle takes place in some open place, the season and the time of the day most favourable for the show is carefully consulted. Every art is studied for displaying the gorgeous trappings of state to the best advantage, and overwhelming the eyes of the beholders with a sight of grandeur and magnificence to which they are ordinarily strangers; and one favourite way of attaining this purpose is by the monarch arraying himself in a superb dress, covered from head to foot with a boundless profusion of gold, silver, and brilliants, and seating himself in an elevated plat-

* There were lately discovered at Sakhara, the metropolis of Memphis, and belonging to a mummy completely cased in gold, even to the toes and finger-ends, an immense gold signet-ring, a pair of bracelets, and a chain or necklace of magnificent workmanship. The whole, particularly the use of the name Ptha, the tutelary divinity of Memphis, led to the conclusion, that this relic belonged either to the Pharaoh himself, or to some high officer, invested with fine linen, and such emblems of dignity and power, as the patriarch Joseph is represented to have been, in Genesis xli. 42. This is now in the British Museum.—*Literary Gazette*, April 1841.—*Editor.*

form, where the full effulgence of the noonday sun will fall in splendid reflection upon his person. 'The king of Persia,' says a modern writer, well acquainted with that court, 'generally appoints for the reception of ambassadors such an hour, as, according to the season, or the intended place of audience, will best enable him to display, in full sunshine, the brilliancy of his jewels. The title of bright or resplendent was added to the name of one sovereign, because his regal ornaments, glittering in the sun's rays on a solemn festival, so dazzled the eyes of all beholders, that they scarcely could bear the effulgence ; and some knew not which was the monarch, and which the great luminary of day.'* Jemsheed, a former sovereign of that country, ordered his throne to be placed in such a manner, facing the east, that, when the sun beamed on his splendid crown, the multitude, with one voice cried out, 'This is the dawn of a new day.' The Shah who at present sits on the throne manages his state occasions in the same artful style, according to the testimony of a modern traveller, who, in a most captivating account of an audience at the court of Persia, thus concludes his description of the monarch :—'His dress baffled all description. The ground of his robes was white, but he was so covered over with jewels of an extraordinary size, and their splendour, from his being seated where the rays of the sun played upon them, was so dazzling, that it was impossible to distinguish the minute parts which combined to give such amazing brilliancy to his white figure.'† Nor is this expedient for impressing their subjects with admiration and awe peculiar to the kings of Persia. Other monarchs of the East adopt the same practice, as appears from the following account of an Indian prince on a gala day :—'He wore a pelisse of purple velvet, braided with small diamonds. These were in such profusion, that the reflection of the sun's rays effectually prevented the irreverence of a continued gaze.'‡

* Ouseley's Trav. † Malcolm's Sketches. ‡ Quar. Rev. No. 72.

[The artifice is neither of modern growth, nor of Persian origin ; but was, in ancient times, both well known and frequently practised by kings in the same quarter of the world, who, equally indebted for the establishment and continuance of their power, to the servile or superstitious awe of their subjects, endeavoured to strengthen the foundations of their throne by the same periodic exhibitions of their grandeur. Herod, a vain-glorious and artful prince, contrived, in spite of many disagreeable personal qualities, to render himself popular by these displays ; and on the feast of the Quinquennalia, which was celebrated at the end of every five years, in honour of his patron, Augustus, he had been in the habit of indulging the people with a series of magnificent spectacles, on which he himself always figured as an actor, concluding the festivity. The occasion referred to in the Acts, he was, in gratitude for some recent favours received from Rome, particularly desirous of signalizing by fetes of unwonted brilliancy ; and accordingly, after several had been spent in shows furnished at his expense, the holidays were terminated by his meeting the citizens of Cesarea in their spacious amphitheatre, where, on a raised platform, sat the monarch, arrayed in all the gorgeous trappings of majesty, his robes, from head to foot, sparkling with a profusion of gold, silver, and jewels, the effect of which he studiously took care to increase, by causing the awning to be opened at an angle, through which the full radiance of the sun fell obliquely on his person, so that his superbly ornamented dress shone with a glare, which enchanted while it overwhelmed the spectators. The design was triumphantly successful; the object of the vain-glorious tetrarch was attained ; a simultaneous shout of admiration burst from the assembled thousands, which, whether it proceeded from servile adulation, or the transporting enthusiasm of the moment, was carried to the blasphemous length of calling him a god.

[A few general observations on the figurative allusions which the sacred writers make to dress, or to the various parts of it, will form an appropriate conclusion to this chapter. 'Whosoever will take thy cloak,' says our Lord, 'let him take thy coat also.' This is no more than a proverbial saying, to intimate that it is better and wiser to submit to a trivial injury, than to resort to troublesome measures, or the redress of the law. The maxim is founded on the loose form of the upper garment which, as already described, is made to be thrown across the shoulder, and which, therefore, is peculiarly liable to be stolen away. Giovanni Finati tells us that he once saw an Arab steal behind his master when he was mounting, and, snatching up his cloak from the hinder part of his horse, run away with it.

[Isaiah represents God as having put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and as clad with zeal as a cloak. This passage refers to the divine manifestations for the deliverance of man from his spiritual enemies; and the metaphor is thought to be founded on an allusion to a Persian custom,—according to which, the king, on special occasions, such as when called to punish the high crimes of his courtiers and nobles, assumes a red garment, sitting in judgment, and pronouncing sentence upon them himself. The same prophet, in his sublime vision of the glory of the Lord, represents 'his train as filling the temple.' A long and magnificent train was considered indispensable to an elegant dress, and it was especially a necessary appendage to that of royalty, insomuch that, owing to the extraordinary length of some of them, train-bearers were appointed to support the skirts. In conformity with these notions of grandeur, Isaiah, when representing the Lord under the character of a glorious king, describes his train as filling the temple. Besides these, there occur innumerable metaphorical references in the New Testament, to the peculiarities of oriental cos-

tume, under which are described the attributes of the Divine nature, as well as the graces and virtues of the christian life. Christ is spoken of as a robe to be put on,* to intimate that we are to imitate fully the principles, and practice, and character, of our divine Master. The righteousness of the Christian is described as a garment; and God himself, to signify his perfections, is represented as clothing himself with light as with a garment.†]

* Rom. xiii. 14. † Psalm civ.

CHAPTER V.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE FROM THE MEALS AND ENTERTAINMENTS OF THE ORIENTALS.

In Greece and other countries, they had their morning meal, consisting of bread and wine, unmixed with water; but to eat and drink in the morning was considered in Israel as an act of debauchery; and Solomon pronounces a wo upon the land, when the people of rank and influence indulged in the pleasures of the table at such an unseasonable time:—'Wo to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning.' The Jews might, perhaps, take a slight repast like the Greeks, about sun rising, although this is very uncertain; but they neither sat down to meat, nor drank wine till after the morning sacrifice.* The Syrians of the present day breakfast as soon as they get up in the morning, on a variety of solid food† [such as bread, fried eggs, honey, and coagulated milk; but this is only in certain circumstances, such as when about to go on a journey, or in the winter season. At other times they content themselves with grapes, and other fruits, when they rise, which they do at early dawn, in order to have leisure for spending the middle

* Hence, when the calumny was industriously circulated against the apostles, who were speaking languages, many of them unintelligible at Jerusalem, that they were under the influence of intoxication, Peter firmly and indignantly repelled the base insinuation, by saying, '¡We are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.'—*Editor.*

† Russel's Hist. of Aleppo, vol. i. pp. 166, 176.

of the day in sleep]; which seems to indicate a change in the manners of the country in this instance. They dine about eleven o'clock in the forenoon in winter, and rather earlier in summer; and sup about five o'clock in the winter, and six in the summer. Their dinner is more sparing and short; their supper more rich and magnificent. Such also was the mode of living in the primitive ages of Greece and Rome; frugal and temperate, they thought it sufficient to take a moderate and hasty breakfast; and after the business and labour of the day was over, refreshed themselves with a plentiful meal.* In many parts of the New Testament, the supper is, in like manner, mentioned as the principal meal:—'Herod, on his birth-day, made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee;'† and in the parable, 'a certain man made a great supper, and bade many.'‡ When Jesus visited Lazarus and his sisters, on his way to the passover, 'they made him a supper.'§

The entertainments among the Jews appear to have been all of one kind, provided at the expense of one man; we have no instance in Scripture of the ἔρανος so common among the Greeks; an entertainment made at the common charge of all present, in which every man contributed his proportion; if the supper given to the Saviour by his friends in Bethany immediately before he suffered, may not be considered as an exception.‖ The materials of which the Jewish entertainments consisted, were at first plain and simple; these were commonly bread and milk, and fruits and herbs. Sparing in the use of flesh, like all the nations of the East, the chosen people usually satisfied their hunger with bread, and quenched their thirst in the running stream. So necessary were bread and water to their subsistence, that under these two words they comprehended every

* Potter's Antiq. vol. ii. p. 353. Adam's Rom. Antiq. p. 433.
† Mark vi. 21. Luke xiv. 16. § John xii. 2.
‖ Compare Matt. xxvi. 1, and Mark xiv. 1, with John xii. 2.

species of food.* Their bread was generally made of wheat or barley, or lentiles and beans. Bread of wheat flour, as being the most excellent, was preferred; barley bread was used only in times of scarcity and distress. Barley bread is in some regions of Persia commonly used by the lower orders.† It must not, however, be omitted, that in making bread, barley was used before any other sort of corn; for it is reported, says Artemidorus,‡ that this was the first food which the gods imparted to mankind; and it was, according to Pliny,§ the most ancient sort of provision. But in more civilized ages, to use the words of the same author, barley bread came to be the food of beasts only.|| [On the sudden and extraordinary supply of provisions that were sold during the famine at the gate of Samaria, mention is made both of barley and fine flour, by the announcement of which the prophet intended to show that there would be plenty of food, such as was used by the common people, as well as of finer bread for the rich.¶ Five barley loaves were found in the possession of a young man among the crowd that on one occasion followed Jesus, and the class of persons who attended him in his journeys

* The natives of eastern countries are still accustomed to make bread their staple food. Shaw informs us that they are great eaters of bread, it being computed that three persons in four live entirely upon it, or else upon such compositions as are made of barley or wheat flour. And Niebuhr says, that 'the principal nourishment of the orientals in general is fresh baked bread, and that, therefore, they take especial care not to want meal. It would be too tedious to quote all the passages of Scripture where bread is spoken of as if it constituted the chief, or rather the only, diet of people in these regions, but a few may be adduced as examples. Abraham when pressing his angelic visitors to partake of his hospitality, when he actually provided a sumptuous entertainment, gave his invitation in this form, 'I will fetch a morsel of bread;' when Hagar and her son were driven from the paternal tent, Abraham took bread and a bottle of water, and gave it to Hagar. Joseph's brethren sat down to bread. Saul had eaten no bread that day.—*Editor.*

† Morier's Travels, vol. i. p. 334. Pitts, pp. 35, 208.

‡ Lib. i. cap. 71. § Nat. Hist. lib. xviii. cap. 13, 14, 18.

|| 1 Kings iv. 28. ¶ 2 Kings vii. 18.

from place to place were generally of the lower orders; the mention of the barley loaves, which we know was, and still is, chiefly ate by the poorer sort is a beautiful and interesting, because an incidental confirmation of the truth and consistency of the evangelical history.* 'These loaves,' says a modern traveller, 'are in size and thickness like a round plate. The barley bread is tolerably good when it is hot, but afterwards when cold it is coarse and tough.'] Yet it was still used by the poorer sort, who were not able to furnish their tables with better provisions; and in the Roman camp, as Vegetius and Livy inform us, soldiers who had been guilty of any offence, were fed with barley, instead of bread corn.† An example of this punishment is recorded in the history of the second Punic war:—The cohorts that lost their standards, had an allowance of barley assigned by Marcellus.‡ And Augustus Cæsar commonly punished the cohorts which gave way to the enemy, by a decimation, and allowing them no provision but barley.§ Mean and contemptible, in the estimation of the numerous and well appointed armies of Midian, was Gideon, with his handful of undisciplined militia; but, guided by the wisdom, and supported by the power of the living God, he inflicted a deserved and exemplary punishment on these proud oppressors. The meagre barley cake was put into the hand of Midian by the God of armies, as a punishment for disobedience of orders, not to make a full end of his chosen people. 'And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and lo, a cake of barley-bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent and smote it, that it fell; and overturned it, that the

* John vi. 9.
† De Re Militari, lib. iii. cap. 13. Hist. lib. xxvii. cap. 13.
‡ Liv. lib. xxvii. p. 13.
§ Suetonius, cap. 24, p. 55: decimatos hordeo pavit.

tent lay along. And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel; for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host.'*

In the first ages, they parched or roasted their grain; a practice which the people of Israel, as we learn from the Scriptures, long continued, as eastern people still do in the present day, with whom parched corn frequently forms one of the dishes at their tables. Afterwards they pounded it in a mortar, to which Solomon thus alludes: — 'Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar among wheat, with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.'† This was succeeded by mills, similar to the hand-mills formerly used in this country; of which there were two sorts: the first were large, and turned by the strength of horses or asses; the second were smaller, and wrought by men, commonly by slaves condemned to this hard labour, as a punishment for their crimes. Chardin remarks in his manuscript, that the persons employed are generally female slaves, who are least regarded, or are least fit for any thing else: for the work is extremely laborious, and esteemed the lowest employment about the house. Most of their corn is ground by these little mills, although they sometimes make use of large mills, wrought by oxen or camels. Near Ispahan, and some of the other great cities of Persia, he saw water-mills; but he did not meet with a single wind-mill in the East. Almost every family grinds their wheat and barley at home, having two portable mill-stones for that purpose; of which the uppermost is turned round by a small handle of wood

* Judg. vii. 13, 14.

† Prov. xxvii. 22. ['The first instruments used for bruising or grinding corn, were only pestles and mortars of wood or stone. The Greeks, Romans, and almost all nations, were a long time before they discovered any other method of making corn into meal.' *Goguet's Orig. of Laws*, vol. i. p. 99.]—*Editor.*

or iron, that is placed in the rim.* When this stone is large, or expedition is required, a second person is called in to assist; and as it is usual for the women only to be concerned in this employment, who seat themselves over against each other, with the mill-stone between them, we may see the propriety of the expression in the declaration of Moses :—'And all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh, that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant, that is behind the mill.'† The manner in which the hand-mills are worked, is well described by Dr Clarke, in his travels :—'Scarcely had we reached the apartment prepared for our reception, when looking from the window into the court-yard belonging to the house, we beheld two women grinding at the mill, in a manner most forcibly illustrating the saying of our Saviour :—"Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken, and the other left." They were preparing flour to make our bread, as it is always customary in the country when strangers arrive. The two women, seated upon the ground opposite to each other, held between them two round flat stones, such as are seen in Lapland, and such as in Scotland are called querns. In the centre of the upper stone was a cavity for pouring in the corn; and by the side of this, an upright wooden handle for moving the stone. As this operation began, one of the women opposite received it from her companion, who pushed it towards her, who again sent it to her companion; thus communicating a rotatory motion to the upper stone, their left hands being all the while employed in supplying fresh corn, as fast as the bran and flour escaped from the sides of the machine.'‡

['The words of our Lord just quoted,' says an observ-

* Volney's Trav. vol. ii. p. 288. † Exod. xi. 5.

‡ Trav. in Palestine, vol. ii. ch. xiii. p. 432. When one goes out in the morning, he everywhere hears the sound of mill-stones; the noise of which often awakes people.—*Chardin's Travels.* —*Editor.*

ant writer, 'convey scarcely any meaning to European readers. But in Judea, where we see constantly two female millers, sitting cross-legged on the ground, turning, by one handle, the upper of two small stones, we are more struck with the force of the illustration used to explain the uncertainty which should prevail at the destruction of the city. It is difficult, on looking at two persons so engaged, to conceive a situation in which it would be less easy to remove the one without interfering with the other; and this point was admirably enforced by reference to a custom with which every listener in those countries must have been quite familiar. A whole quarto of commentaries on the above verse could not have impressed my mind with a tenth part of the conviction which flashed upon me, when I first saw two women actually "grinding at the mill," all unconscious of the cause of my admiration, and as yet ignorant, alas! of the sublime lesson, to enforce which their humble task was referred to.'*]

When they are not impelled, as in this instance, to premature exertions by the arrival of strangers, they grind their corn in the morning, at break of day; the noise of the mill is then to be heard every where; and is often so great as to rouse the inhabitants of the cities from their slumbers;† for it is well known they bake their bread every day, as it is apt to become sour if kept longer, and commonly grind their corn as it is wanted. The noise of the mill-stone is, therefore, with great propriety, selected by the prophet as one of the tokens of a populous and thriving country:—'Moreover, I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of mill-stones and the light of a candle, and their whole land shall be a desolation.'‡ The morning shall no more be cheered with

* Capt. B. Hall's Fragments, vol. iii. p. 25.
† Odyssey, lib. xx. l. 106–110.
‡ Jeremiah xxv. 10. Harmer's Observ. vol. i. p. 34.

the joyful sound of the mill, nor the shadows of evening by the light of a candle; the morning shall be silent, and the evening dark and melancholy, where desolation reigns.

'At the earliest dawn of the morning,' says Mr Forbes, 'in all the Hindoo towns and villages, the hand-mills are at work, when the menials and widows grind meal for the daily consumption of their family. This work is always performed by women, who resume their task every morning, especially the forlorn Hindoo widows, divested of every ornament, and, with their heads shaved, degraded to almost a state of servitude.'* How affecting, then, is the call to the daughter of Babylon,—'Come down, and sit in the dust, O daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans; for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. Take the mill-stones, and grind meal.'†

The custom of daily grinding their corn for the family, shows the propriety of the law:—'No man shall take the nether or the upper mill-stone to pledge, for he taketh a man's life to pledge;'‡ because, if he take either the upper or the nether mill-stone, he deprives him of his daily provision, which cannot be prepared without them, and, by consequence, exposes him and all his house to utter destruction. That complete and perpetual desolation which, by the just allotment of heaven, is ere long to overtake the mystical Babylon, is clearly signified by the same precept:—'The sound of the mill-stone shall be heard no more at all in thee.'§ The means of subsistence being entirely destroyed, no human creature shall ever occupy the ruined habitations more.

In the book of Judges, the sacred historian alludes, with characteristic accuracy, to several circumstances implied in that custom, where he describes the fall of

* Forbes' Orient. Mem. vol. i. p. 210.
† Isa. xlvii. 1, 2,
‡ Deut xxiv. 6.
§ Rev. xviii. 22.

Abimelech. A woman of Thebez, driven to desperation by his furious attack on the tower, started up from the mill at which she was grinding, seized the upper millstone *(phelarekeb)*, and rushing to the top of the gate, cast it on his head, and fractured his skull.* This was the feat of a woman, for the mill is worked only by females: it was not a piece of a mill-stone, but the *rider*, the distinguishing name of the upper millstone, which literally rides upon the other, and is a piece or *division* of the mill: it was a stone of 'two feet broad,' and therefore fully sufficient, when thrown from such a height, to produce the effect mentioned in the narrative.

It displays also the vindictive contempt which suggested the punishment of Samson, the captive ruler of Israel. The Philistines, with barbarous contumely, compelled him to perform the meanest service of a female slave; they sent him to grind in the prison,† but not for himself alone; this, although extremely mortifying to the hero, had been more tolerable; they made him grinder for the prison, while the vilest malefactor was permitted to look on, and join in the cruel mockery of his tormentors. Samson, the ruler and avenger of Israel, labours, as Isaiah foretold the virgin daughter of Babylon should labour:—'Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; there is no throne (no seat for thee), O daughter of the Chaldeans. . . . Take the mill-stones and grind meal,' but not with the wonted song:—'Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness,'‡ there to conceal thy vexation and disgrace.

The females engaged in this operation endeavoured to beguile the lingering hours of toilsome exertion with a song.§ We learn from an expression of Aristophanes, preserved by Athenæus, that the Grecian maidens accompanied the sound of the mill-stones with their voices,

* Judges ix. 53. † Judges xvi. 21.

‡ Isaiah xlvii. 1. See Taylor's Calmet, vol. iii.

§ Mungo Park observed this custom in the interior of Africa,

των μτισσουσων αγγη τις ωδη. This circumstance imparts an additional beauty and force to the description of the prophet :—The light of a candle was no more to be seen in the evening ; the sound of the mill-stones, the indication of plenty ; and the song of the grinders, the natural expression of joy and happiness, were no more to be heard at the dawn.* The grinding of corn at so early an hour, throws light on a passage of considerable obscurity :—'And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ishbosheth, who lay on a bed at noon ; and they came thither into the midst of the house, as though they would have fetched wheat, and they smote him under the fifth rib ; and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped.'† It is still a custom in the East, according to Dr Perry,‡ to allow their soldiers a certain quantity of corn, with other articles of provisions, together with some pay : and as it was the custom also to carry their corn to the mill at break of day, these two captains very naturally went to the palace the day before to fetch wheat, in order to distribute it to the soldiers, that it might be sent to the mill at the accustomed hour in the morning. The princes of the East, in those days, as the history of David shows, lounged in their divan, or reposed on their couch, till the cool of the evening began to advance. Rechab and Baanah, therefore, came in the heat of the day, when they knew that Ishbosheth their master would be resting on his bed ; and as it was necessary, for the reason just given, to have the corn the day before it was needed, their coming at that time, though it might be a little earlier than usual, created no suspicion, and attracted no notice.§

when he was invited into a hut by some female natives, in order to shelter him from the inclemency of a very rainy night. While thus employed, one of the females, while grinding, sung a song, which the rest joined in a chorus.—*Editor.*

* Shaw's Travels, vol. i. p. 416.

† 2 Sam. iv. 5, 6.

‡ Shaw's Trav. vol. i. p. 43.

§ Harmer's Observ. vol. i. p. 433.

In the cities and villages of Barbary, where public ovens are established, the bread is usually leavened; but among the Bedouins and Kabyles, as soon as the dough is kneaded, it is made into thin cakes, either to be baked immediately upon the coals, or else in a shallow earthen vessel like a frying pan, called Tajen.* Such were the *unleavened cakes*, which we so frequently read of in Scripture, and those also which *Sarah made quickly upon the hearth.*† These last are about an inch thick; and being commonly prepared in woody countries, are used all along the shores of the Black sea, from the Palus-Mæotis to the Caspian, in Chaldea, and in Mesopotamia, except in towns.‡ A fire is made in the middle of the room; and when the bread is ready for baking, a corner of the hearth is swept, the bread is laid upon it, and covered with ashes and embers; in a quarter of an hour they turn it.§ Sometimes they use small convex plates of iron: which are most common in Persia, and among the nomadic tribes, as being the easiest way of baking, and done with the least expense; for the bread is extremely thin, and soon prepared.‖ The oven is used in every part of Asia; it is made in the ground, four or five feet deep, and three in diameter, well plastered with mortar. When it is hot, they place the bread (which is commonly long, and not thicker than a finger), against the sides, where it is baked in a very short space. Ovens, Chardin apprehends, were not used in Canaan in the patriarchal age; all the bread of that time was baked upon a plate, or under the ashes; and he supposes, what is nearly self-evident, that the cakes which Sarah baked on the hearth, were of the last sort, and that the shew-bread was of the same kind.¶ The Arabs about mount Carmel use a great stone pitcher in which they kindle a fire; and when it

* Niebuhr's Arabia, vol. i. p. 209.
† Gen. xviii. 6. Shaw's Trav. vol. i. p. 415.
‡ Ray's Collection of Trav. pp. 149, 150.
§ Rauwolff, Descrip. de l'Arabie, p. 46.
‖ Pococke's Trav. vol. ii. p. 96. ¶ Harmer's Observ. vol. i. p. 415.

is heated, they mix meal and water, which they apply with the hollow of their hands to the outside of the pitcher; and this extremely soft paste, spreading itself, is baked in an instant. The heat of the pitcher having dried up all the moisture, the bread comes off as thin as our wafers; and the operation is so speedily performed, that in a very little time a sufficient quantity is made.* But their best sort of bread they bake, either by heating an oven, or a large pitcher half full of little smooth shining flints, upon which they lay the dough, spread out in the form of a thin broad cake. Sometimes they use a shallow earthen vessel, resembling a frying-pan, which seems to be the pan mentioned by Moses, in which the meat-offering was baked.† This vessel, Dr Shaw informs us, serves both for baking and frying; for the bagreah of the people of Barbary, differs not much from our pancakes, only, instead of rubbing the pan in which they fry them with butter, they rub it with soap to make them like a honey comb. If, then, these accounts of the Arab stone pitcher, the pan, and the iron hearth or copper plate, be attended to, it will not be difficult to understand the laws of Moses in the second chapter of Leviticus; they will be found to answer perfectly well to the description which he gives us of the different ways of preparing the meat-offerings. The precepts of Moses evidently bear a particular relation to the methods of preparing bread, used by those who live in tents, although they were sufficient for the direction of his people after their settlement in Canaan; and his mentioning cakes of bread baked in the oven, and wafers that were baked on the outside of these pitchers, in the fourth verse, with bread baked on a plate, and in a pan, in the fifth and seventh verses, inclines Mr Harmer to think, that the people of Israel prepared their meat-offerings in their tents,

* D'Arvieux Voy. dans la Palest. pp. 192, 193.
† Lev. ii. 5. Shaw's Trav. vol. i. p. 416, note.

which they afterwards presented at the national altar, rather than in the court of the tabernacle.*

These pitchers, which the modern Arabs use for baking cakes of bread within them, and wafers on their outside, are not the only portable ovens in the East. Jerome, in his commentary on Lamentations, describes an eastern oven as a round vessel of brass, whose sides are blackened by the surrounding fire. Such, it is probable, were the ovens mentioned by Moses, and used in the East, long before the age in which he flourished.

Mr Jackson, in his Journey over land from India, gives an account of an eastern oven, equally instructive and amusing, as it confirms the statements of ancient travellers, and shows the surprising expertness of the Arabian women in baking their bread. 'They have a small place built with clay, between two and three feet high, having a hole at the bottom for the convenience of drawing out the ashes, something similar to a lime-kiln. The oven (which he thinks the most proper name for this place), is usually about fifteen inches wide at top, and gradually widening to the bottom. It is heated with wood; and when sufficiently hot, and perfectly clear from the smoke, having nothing but clear embers at the bottom, which continue to reflect great heat, they prepare the dough in a large bowl, and mould the cakes to the desired size on a board, or stone, placed near the oven. After they have kneaded the cake to a proper consistence, they pat it a little, then toss it about with great dexterity in one hand, till it is as thin as they choose to make it. They then wet one side of it with water, at the same time wetting the hand and arm with which they put it into the oven. The side of the cake adheres fast to the side of the oven, till it is sufficiently baked, when, if not paid proper attention to, it would fall down among the embers. If they were not ex-

* Harmer's Observ. vol. i. p. 419.

ceedingly quick at this work, the heat of the oven would burn their arms; but they perform it with such an amazing dexterity, that one woman will continue keeping three or four cakes in the oven at once, till she has done baking. This mode,' he adds, 'requires not half the fuel that is consumed in Europe.'*

In this way Tamar seems to have prepared the cakes for her brother Amnon:—'She took flour and made dough, and kneaded it into a proper consistence, (vattilabeb), and tossed it about in her hand (vathebashel), and dressed or baked the cakes in his sight.' Nor should it appear strange that a king's daughter in the reign of David, was employed in this menial service, for Dr Russel says, the eastern ladies often prepare cakes and other things in their own apartments; and some few particular dishes are cooked by themselves, but not in their apartments; on such occasions they go to some room near the kitchen.† The eastern bread is made in small, thin, moist cakes; it must be eaten new, and is unfit for use when kept longer than a day. Both Russel and Rauwolf, however, mention several kinds of bread and cakes; some which are done with yolks of eggs; some which are mixed with coriander and other seeds; and some which are strewed with them; and Pitts describes a kind of biscuits, which the Mohammedan pilgrims carry from Egypt to Mecca, and back again, perfectly fresh and good.‡

The Holy Scriptures accord with the narratives of modern travellers, in representing the oriental loaves as very small, three of them being required for the repast of a single person:—'Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?' § It appears also from the history

* P. 50. † Harmer's Observ. vol. i. p. 425, note by the editor.
‡ Russel's Hist. of Aleppo, vol. i. p. 116; and Ray's Trav. p. 95.
§ Luke xi. 5, 6. As the heat of the day is unfavourable for a

of Abraham, and particularly from his entertaining the three angels, that they were generally eaten new, and baked as they were needed.* Sometimes, however, they were made to keep several days; for the shew bread might be eaten after it had stood a week before the Lord. The pretence of the Gibeonites, that their bread had become mouldy from the length of the road, although it was taken fresh from the oven when they left home, proves, that bread for a journey was made to keep a considerable time. In every one of these minute circumstances, the sacred volume perfectly corresponds with the statements of modern travellers.

One species of bread used in ancient Palestine, bears the name of nekoudim, in the history of the kings, about the meaning of which some diversity of opinion prevails. The word occurs in the instructions which Jeroboam gave to his wife, and is rendered cracknels in our translation:—'And Jeroboam said to his wife, ... take with thee ten loaves, and *cracknels*, and a cruise of honey, and go to him; he shall tell thee what shall become of the child.' Buxtorf supposes, that the original term signifies biscuits, either because they were formed into little buttons, or because they were pricked full of holes in a particular manner. The last idea was adopted by our translators; for cracknels are a sort of bread which is full of holes, and formed into a flourish of lattice work. But the word is derived from a participle which nowhere signifies pierced with holes, or formed into net work, but spotted or

journey, travellers often resume their course in the cool of the evening, and arrive at their destination at midnight. Loaves in the East not admitting of being kept above a day, was the reason of this person having none of his own, and of his applying to a neighbour, who, having a family of children, he naturally expected would have a larger supply. In cases such as the emergency referred to, where a loan of bread is asked and obtained from a neighbour, they take care when grinding corn for their own family next morning, to prepare an extra quantity, and return at an early hour fresh loaves for those they had borrowed.—*Editor.*

* This is still the custom among the Arabian shepherds. Buckingham's Travels, vol. ii. pp, 244, 246, 251.

speckled. It is accordingly used by Moses, to signify those cattle in the flocks of Laban, which were marked with spots.* In the book of Joshua, it denotes those mouldy spots on the bread of the Gibeonites, which they pretended the length of their journey had occasioned.† In the feminine gender, it denotes studs or spots of silver; and is rendered in the Septuagint στιγματων; and by the Vulgate, vermiculatas, inlaid.‡ The idea of Mr Harmer is, therefore, to be preferred, that it denotes cakes or loaves strewed, and by consequence spotted with coriander and other seeds; a sort of bread which is still quite common in Syria, and many other countries of the East.§

In primitive times, an oven was designed only to serve a single family, and to bake for them no more than the bread of one day; a custom which still continues in some places of the East; but the increase of population in the cities, higher degrees of refinement, or other causes in the progress of time, suggested the establishment of public bakehouses. They seem to have been introduced into Judea long before the captivity; for the prophet Jeremiah speaks of 'the baker's street,' in the most familiar manner, as a place well known.|| This, however, might be only a temporary establishment, to supply the wants of the soldiers assembled from other places, to defend Jerusalem. If they received a daily allowance of bread, as is the practice still in some eastern countries, from the royal bakehouses, the order of the king to give the prophet daily a piece of bread, out of the street where they were erected, in the same manner as the defenders of the city, was perfectly natural. The custom alluded to, still maintains its ground at Algiers, where the unmarried soldiers receive every day from the public bakehouses, a certain number of loaves.¶ Pitts, in-

* Gen. xxx. 40. † Josh. ix. 12. ‡ Song i. 11.
§ Observ. vol. i. pp. 422, 423. || Jer. xxxvii. 21.
¶ Shaw's Travels, vol. i. p. 544.

deed asserts, that the Algerines have public bake-houses for the accommodation of the whole city.* 'The women prepare their dough at home, and the bakers send their boys about the streets, to give notice of their being ready to receive and carry it to the bake-houses. They bake their cakes every day, or every other day, and give the boy who brings the bread home, a piece or little cake for the baking, which is sold by the baker.† Small as the eastern loaves are, it appears from this account, that they give a piece of one only to the baker, as a reward for his trouble. This will perhaps illustrate Ezekiel's account of the false prophets, receiving pieces of bread by way of gratuities:—'And will ye pollute me among my people, for handfuls of barley, and pieces of bread?'‡ These are compensations still used in the East, but of the meanest kind, and for services of the lowest sort.'§

They have other ways of preparing their corn for food, besides making it into bread. Burgle is very commonly used among the Christians of Aleppo; which is wheat boiled, then bruised in a mill so as to separate it from the husk, and, when dried, it is boiled like rice into a pillaw, made into balls, with meat and spices. The drying of burgle, though mentioned by some writers as a modern operation, seems to throw light on a remarkable passage in the history of David: the concealment of his two spies in a well whose mouth was covered with corn. The custom of exposing corn in this way, must have been very common in Judea, else it had rather excited suspicion in the minds of the pursuers, than diverted their attention from the spot where the spies were concealed. That the well's mouth was covered on that occasion with burgle or boiled wheat, is exceedingly probable; for Dr Russel ob-

* Shaw's Travels, vol. i. p. 65.

† The chief baker among the Persians was dignified with the title of Mirza, or lord; from whence it may be inferred that Pharaoh's chief baker was a person of equal dignity.—*Morier's Travels*, vol. i. p. 103. ‡ Ezekiel xiii. 19. § Harmer, vol. i. p. 270.

serves,* that in preparing it after it has been softened in warm water, it is commonly laid out in the court-yard to dry. It could not be flour or meal; for they grind it only in small quantities, as they want it, and never are known to expose it in this way. Bishop Patrick supposes it was corn newly thrashed out the woman pretended to dry; but if this was practised at all, of which we have no evidence, it was by no means common, and therefore calculated rather to betray, than to conceal the spies. Besides, the same word is used to signify corn beaten in a mortar with a pestle,† not on the barn floor with a thrashing instrument; now, burgle is actually pounded in this manner. It was therefore burgle or boiled wheat, which D'Arvieux expressly says is dried in the sun; adding, that they prepare a whole year's provision of it at once. Wheat and barley were prepared in the same way by the ancient Romans; which renders it very probable that the custom was universal among the civilized nations of antiquity.‡ This is the reason why neither the exposure of the corn, nor the large quantity, produced the least suspicion; every circumstance accorded with the public usage of the country, and, by consequence, the preparation of this species of food is as ancient as the days of David.§ [Wells in the East having their mouths level with the ground, nothing is more easy than to put a mat or covering over the opening to conceal them from the sight. Who has not seen corn or flour spread on mats in the sun to dry? The woman affected to have this object in view when she spread a covering over the well. In the Kandian war great numbers were required to follow the army as cooks, bearers, and messengers, and such was the aversion of the people to the duty, that government was obliged to use force to com-

* Travels, vol. i. p. 117. See also Dr Clarke's note, Harmer's Observations, vol. i. p. 473.

† Proverbs xxvii. 22. ‡ Pliny's Natural History, lib. xviii. c. 14.

§ See Harmer's Observations, vol. i. p. 468.

pel them to go. And it was no uncommon thing, when the officers were seen to approach a cottage, for the husband or sons to be concealed, as were Ahimaaz and Jonathan.*]

Sawick is a different preparation, and consists of corn parched in the ear; it is made as well of barley and rice, as of wheat. In the inspired volume, it is never called parched meal or flour, but always parched corn; and consequently, seems to remain after the roasting, and to be eaten in the state of corn. In confirmation of this idea, we may quote a fact stated by Hasselquist, that, in journeying from Acre to Sidon, he saw a shepherd eating his dinner, consisting of half ripe ears of wheat roasted, which he ate, says the traveller, with as good an appetite as a Turk does his pillaw. The same kind of food, he says, is much used in Egypt by the poor; they roast the ears of Turkish wheat or millet; but it is, in his account, far inferior to bread.† Dr Shaw is of a different opinion; he supposes the kali, or parched corn of the Scriptures, which he translates parched pulse, means parched cicers. But we frequently read in Scripture of dried or parched corn; and the word used in those passages, is most naturally to be understood of corn, and not of pulse. Besides, Rauwolf asserts‡ that cicers are used in the East only as a part of the desert after their meals.§ But it cannot be reasonably supposed, that Boaz would entertain his reapers with things of this kind: or that those fruits, which in modern times are used only in deserts, formed the principal part of a reaper's meal, in the field of so wealthy a proprietor. This supposition, however, the opinion of Dr Shaw requires,

* Roberts' Oriental Illustrations. † Pp. 166, 167.

‡ Ray's Collection of Travels, vol. i. p. 68.

§ Boiled beans stewed with garlic form a favourite dish at the tables of people of rank. They are often eaten, as is stated in the text, parched, but then they are only sprinkled over other more substantial dishes, or used as an accompaniment to cheese, and as a desert.—*Editor.*

for it is said in the inspired record, 'He reached Ruth parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left.'* Nor can it well be supposed, that a trifling article in a desert would have been thought of so much importance by an inspired writer, as to obtain a prominent place in his account of the provisions with which the armies of Israel were supplied, immediately after crossing the Jordan :—'And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched cicers (corn) in the self-same day.'† Would an inspired writer say, as if he had been recording some very important matter, that the manna ceased after they had enjoyed a desert of cicers? If not, the word kali must refer, not to cicers or any other pulse, but to parched corn, as it is properly rendered in our translation, an article of great importance in the daily sustenance of that people. The justice of these remarks is fully verified by the list of provisions which the nobles of Israel, on the other side of Jordan, sent to David, when he fled before his son Absalom, in which parched corn and parched pulse are mentioned in different parts of the statement, and as distinct articles:—'They brought wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentiles, and parched pulse,'‡ to which class the cicer belongs; therefore, these two cannot be reckoned the same, without charging the inspired historian with an idle tautology. Nor is it reasonable to suppose, that he meant the flour of dried or parched grain; for why then does he continue to call it corn? When reduced to flour or meal, it is no longer in the state of corn, and is never, in any writing that has the least pretensions to accuracy, called by that name. In the same passage, the sacred writer distinguishes the wheat and barley from the flour of these grains; what satisfactory reason then can be assigned for his calling the flour of dried or roasted grain, by the

* Ruth ii. 14. † Josh. v. 11. ‡ 2 Sam. xvii. 28.

strange and deceptive name of parched corn? Is it not much more natural to suppose, the reason is, because it was roasted in the ear, and eaten in that state? This accords with fact; for Hasselquist actually saw roasted ears of corn eaten at dinner in Palestine. It is not meant to deny that they used flour of parched corn; this they frequently did; but they never called it parched corn, but uniformly gave it the appropriate name of flour.

[In preparing their victuals, the orientals use wood whenever they can procure it, brushwood, thorns, and the prunings of garden trees. In travelling through the desert parts of eastern countries, travellers are exposed sometimes to much inconvenience and many shifts in consequence of the scarcity of fuel, and one of the first and most necessary occupations to which every one betakes himself on arriving at a stage is to go in search of materials for kindling a fire among the straggling bushes, which here and there diversify the barren ground. Such, as we learn from the story of the man who was convicted of the crime of gathering sticks on the Sabbath, was the daily employment of the Israelites in their journey from Egypt.* In the same office of collecting a pile of firewood was Paul busied when the viper, as it felt the dangerous vicinity of the flames, sprang out and fastened on the hand of the apostle;† and such we are assured by numerous travellers is the menial pursuit in which all must necessarily set their hands in passing through an unfrequented country. 'Paul's employment,' says Mr Campbell, 'was often mine while travelling, viz. gathering branches of trees, or bushes, to make a fire on halting, either for cooking or warming ourselves. Were we hungry or cold, all who could be spared from attending to the cattle, erecting of tents, &c. naturally assisted in collecting fuel. Some hazard was attached to this necessary employment, particularly so in the

* Numb. xv. 32. † Acts xxviii. 4.

dark, for on laying hold of a bush, to tear it up, or to break off a branch from it, we were in danger of grasping a serpent, scorpion, or some other venemous animal, which, as the fire approached them, naturally retired and made a spring from it.'* Young people and children who were not burdened with other regular employment, were often despatched, as they are in eastern countries in the present day, upon this errand. 'My servant,' says Jowett, 'directed my attention to a common circumstance, which aptly enough illustrates a verse of Scripture. It was a family returning from their work in the field, bringing home wood for fuel. Several of them were young girls, the youngest a child not above four years old, whom the rest were continually scolding for not keeping up with them, although it was manifestly struggling under a very disproportionate share of the family burden. This may explain a passage in Lamentations, where it is said, "the children fell under the wood."'† Among the Israelites, when settled in Canaan, as among the inhabitants of oriental towns in the present day, charcoal as well as wood, is much used. But frequently neither one nor the other can be got. The dense population of ancient Palestine prevented the cultivation of extensive plantations, and the insecure state of most modern oriental countries indisposes men of property and substance to engage in this useful and profitable as well as ornamental mode of improving their lands; and the consequence is, that wood is, and ever has been, a scarce commodity with natives of eastern countries, who, whenever they obtain it by laborious collecting, or can purchase it at a high rate, prefer it in the winter season for their rooms. Of course they are driven to the use of substitutes, and various materials are employed as fuel, of which mention is made a few pages after. But in the scarcity of all these they are reduced to use dried dung for fuel.]

* African Light. † Christian Researches. Lam. v. 13.

At Aleppo, the inhabitants use wood and charcoal in their rooms, but heat their baths with cow dung, the pairings of fruit, and other things of a similar kind, which they employ people to gather for that purpose.* In Egypt, according to Pitts, the scarcity of wood is so great, that at Cairo they commonly heat their ovens with horse or cow dung, or dirt of the streets; what wood they have being brought from the shores of the Black Sea, and sold by weight.† Chardin attests the same fact:—'The eastern people always used cow, horse, and camel dung for baking,‡ boiling a pot, and dressing all kinds of victuals that are easily cooked, especially in countries that have but little wood;' and Dr Russel remarks, in a note, that 'the Arabs carefully collect the dung of the sheep and camel, as well as that of the cow; and that the dung, offals, and other matters, used in the bagnios, after having been new gathered in the streets, are carried out of the city, and laid in great heaps to dry, where they become very offensive. They are intolerably disagreeable, while drying, in the town adjoining to the bagnios; and are so at all times when it rains, though they be stacked, pressed hard together, and thatched at top.'§ These statements exhibit, in a very strong light, the extreme misery of the Jews, who escaped from the devouring sword of Nebuchadnezzar:—'They that feed delicately are desolate in the streets; they that were brought up in scarlet embrace dunghills.'‖ To embrace dunghills is a species of wretchedness, perhaps unknown to us in the history of modern warfare; but it presents a dreadful and appalling image, when the circumstances to which it alludes are recollected. What can be imagined more distressing to those who lived delicately,

* Russel's History, vol. i. p. 38. † P. 104.

‡ Dr Shaw, in the preface to his Travels, says, that camel's dung, when left for three days to dry in the sun, easily catches fire, and burns like charcoal.

§ Clarke's Harmer, vol. i. p. 45, note by the editor.

‖ Lamentations iv. 5.

than to wander without food in the streets? What more disgusting and terrible to those who had been clothed in rich and splendid garments, than to be forced by the destruction of their palaces, to seek shelter among stacks of dung, the filth and stench of which it is almost impossible to endure. The dunghill, it appears from holy writ, is one of the common retreats of the mendicant, which imparts an exquisite force and beauty to a passage in the song of Hannah:—'He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory.'* The change in the circumstances of that excellent woman, she reckoned as great (and it was to her not less unexpected), as the elevation of a poor despised beggar, from a nauseous and polluting dunghill, rendered tenfold more fœtid by the intense heat of an oriental sun, to one of the highest and most splendid stations on earth.

The custom of baking their bread with dung, serves also to explain and illustrate the charge which Jehovah gave to the prophet Ezekiel, to prepare or bake his bread with such fuel. To display, by a most significant emblem, the extreme misery and wretchedness of his people in their dispersion, he receives a command to bake his bread with human excrement; but in answer to his earnest entreaties, he obtains permission to use cow dung.† Had cow dung been ordered at first, it would have by no means sufficiently explained those necessities, and that filthiness in their manner of living, to which the captives were to be reduced among the rivers of Babylon; because many orientals use cow dung in baking their bread: he is therefore commanded to make use of human dung, as some nations of the East are actually compelled to do.‡ And although the command was afterwards mitigated, the end in view was obtained; a fearful picture of the misery in which

* 1 Samuel ii. 8. † Ezekiel iv. 12. ‡ Sandy's Trav. p. 85.

the captive Jews were to linger out their wretched years, being placed under the eye of that stubborn people. Even the bread prepared with cow dung, is extremely disagreeable. D'Arvieux complains of the fœtid smell emitted by their cakes;* and Tournefort avers, 'it is almost inconceivable what a horrid perfume this dung makes in the houses; every thing they eat has a stench of this vapour.' It is evident from these facts, that the prophet was not commanded, as Voltaire alleges, to eat human ordure, mingled with his victuals, but only to use it as fuel. This certainly communicated a most nauseous taste to the bread: yet several nations of Caucasus, that have very little fuel of any kind, submit to it every day. But if it is not inconsistent with the majesty of God, to reduce a portion of his rational creation to such painful circumstances, it could not be inconsistent to lay that command on Ezekiel for a few months.†

Dung is used as fuel in the East only when wood cannot be had; for the latter, and even any other combustible substance, is preferred whenever it can be obtained. The inhabitants of Aleppo, according to Russel,‡ use thorns and fuel of a similar kind, for those culinary purposes which require haste, particularly for boiling, which seems to be the reason that Solomon mentions the 'crackling of thorns under a pot.' The same allusion to the use of thorns for boiling, occurs in other parts of the sacred volume: Thus the Psalmist assures the wicked, 'Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath.' The Jews are sometimes compared in the prophets to 'a brand plucked out of the burning;'§ a figure which Chardin considers as referring to vine-twigs, and other brushwood, which the orientals fre-

* Pp. 193, 194. † See Taylor's Calmet, vol. iii.
‡ Harmer's Observations, vol. i. p. 459, Dr Clark's note.
§ Amos iv. 11. Zechariah iii. 2. Harmer's Observations, vol. i. p. 460.

quently use for fuel, and which, in a few minutes, must be consumed if they are not snatched out of the fire; and not to those battens, or large branches, commonly distinguished by that name in those regions, which will lie a long time in the fire before they are reduced to ashes. If this idea be correct, it displays in a stronger and more lively manner the weakness of Israel, and Joshua the high priest; the extreme danger to which they were exposed, and the seasonable interposition of Jehovah, than is furnished by any other view of the phrase. The same remark applies to the figure by which the prophet Isaiah describes the sudden and complete destruction of Rezin, and the son of Remaliah; only, in this passage, the firebrands are supposed to be smoking; that is, in the opinion of Harmer, 'having the steam issuing with force from one end, in consequence of the fire burning violently at the other, by which they are speedily reduced to ashes:' The words of the prophet are, 'Take heed and be quiet; fear not, neither be faint-hearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah.'* It is not easy to conceive an image more striking than this; the remains of two small twigs burning with violence at one end, as appears by the steaming of the other, are soon reduced to ashes; so shall the kingdoms of Syria and Israel sink into ruin, and disappear.

The scarcity of fuel in the East obliges the inhabitants to use by turns every kind of combustible matter. The withered stalks of herbs and flowers, the tendrils of the vine,† the small branches of myrtle, rosemary, and other plants, are all used in heating their ovens and bagnios.‡ We can easily recognize this practice

* Isaiah vii. 4. Harmer's Observations, vol. i. p. 461. Russel's History of Aleppo, vol. i. p. 38.

† This fuel was considered the best adapted for washings, especially of fine linen.—*Editor.*

‡ Russel's Hist of Aleppo, vol. i. p. 38.

in these words of our Lord :—'Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?'* The grass of the field in this passage, evidently includes the lilies of which our Lord had just been speaking; and by consequence herbs in general; and in this extensive sense the word χορτος is not unfrequently taken. These beautiful productions of nature, so richly arrayed, and so exquisitely perfumed, that the splendour even of Solomon is not to be compared with theirs, shall soon wither and decay, and be used as fuel to heat the oven and the bagnio. Has God so adorned these flowers and plants of the field, which retain their beauty and vigour but for a few days, and are then applied to some of the meanest purposes of life; and will he not much more clothe you that are the disciples of his own Son, that are capable of immortality, and destined to the enjoyment of eternal happiness?†

To compensate in some measure for the scarcity of fuel, the orientals endeavour to consume as little as possible in preparing their victuals. For this purpose they make a hole in their dwellings, about a foot and a half deep, in which they put their earthen pots, with the meat in them, closed up, about the half above the middle; three-fourth parts they lay about with stones, and the fourth part is left open, through which they fling in their dried dung, and any other combustible substances they can procure, which burn immediately, and produce so great a heat, that the pot becomes as

* Matth. vi. 28-30.

† Harmer's Observ. vol. i. p. 462. [The prophet Ezekiel alludes to the practice of using the bones of animals as fuel:—'Take the choice of the flock, and burn also the bones under it, and make it boil well;' Ezekiel xxiv. 5.]—*Editor.*

hot as if it stood over a strong fire of coals ; so that they boil their meat with greater expedition and much less fuel, than it can be done upon the hearth.* As the people of Israel in the wilderness must have been reduced to the necessity of sparing their fuel as much as any other oriental nation, the preceding statement may be considered as a simple but satisfactory comment, on the charge given by Moses on the law :— 'And every thing, whereupon any part of their carcase falleth, shall be unclean; whether it be oven, or ranges for pots, they shall be broken down ; for they are unclean, and shall be unclean to you.'† One commentator supposes the word translated ranges for pots, signifies an earthen pot to boil meat in, with a lid ; another provides it with feet ; but such vessels come under the direction of the thirty-third verse, which requires them, when they have been polluted, to be broken : while the ranges for pots were, like altars, houses, or walls of cities, to be broken down. This perfectly agrees with Rauwolf's description of the eastern apparatus for boiling a pot, three parts of which were laid or built about with stones ; this little building the law of Moses required to be broken down when it happened to become ceremonially unclean.‡

The hole in which the pot is set, has an aperture on one side, for the purpose of receiving the fuel, which seems to be what Jeremiah calls the face of the pot :— 'I see,' said the prophet, 'a pot, and the face thereof is towards the north ;'§ intimating that the fuel to heat it was to be brought from that quarter. This emblematical prediction was fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar, whose dominions lay to the north of Palestine, led his

* Rauwolf's Trav. p. 192. † Lev. xi. 35.

‡ The ranges for pots, or fire places, were similar to those rude and primitive erections which are still seen on the hearths of huts in the poor remote districts of Scotland, which are formed of a few bricks or stones piled edgeways. It would be very little trouble to put them up again after being dismantled as the law of Moses required.—*Editor.* § Jer. i. 13.

armies against Jerusalem, and overturned the thrones of the house of David.*

The descendants of Shem, in the line of Abraham, using the liberty granted after the deluge to the second father of the human race, to eat the flesh ‘ of every moving thing that liveth,’ from the beginning subjected the sheep and the ox to the knife ; but they seem for many successive ages to have spared, on all ordinary occasions, the young of the flock, and of the herd. So late as the days of Amos, ‘ to eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall,’ was considered as the conduct of a very degenerate race, the mark of a luxurious appetite, and a proper object of inspired reproof. This sentiment seems to have been very general in the East ; for in Homer, the aged king of Troy reproached his sons, because they feasted on young lambs and kids.† The patriarch Abraham, therefore, yielded to the ardour of eastern hospitality, combined with love and veneration for the unknown visitants, when he fetched from the herd a calf, tender and good, and dressed it whole for their entertainment. And when the father, in the parable, received in safety his long-lost son, he expressed the joy of his heart by killing for him the fatted calf; which was so uncommon, that it is the only circumstance mentioned in the report of the servant, and resented by the elder son of the family.‡ The hospitality of the wealthiest Jews seldom provided more delicate viands than the flesh of sheep, and oxen, and fat cattle ; in this manner, Adonijah entertained his friends when he aspired to the crown ; and Abigail endeavoured to avert the vengeance of David, by a present, among other things, of ‘*five sheep ready dressed.*’§ [In the account of the sumptuous provision which the king, described in the parable, prepared for his son’s wedding, ‘ oxen and fatlings’ are alone particularized as specimens, to show that the

* Harmer’s Observ. vol. i. p. 465.
† Il. lib. xxiv. l. 262.
‡ Luke xv. 23, 27, 30.
§ 1 Sam. xxv. 18.

festivities were conducted on a scale of magnificence worthy of the grandeur of the occasion.* And the well known proverb of Solomon, 'better is a dinner of herbs, where love is, than a stalled or fatted ox, and hatred therewith,' is manifestly founded on the same practice of reserving the best fed of the flock for select occasions of entertainment.† The fact is, that, although the orientals do not eat much animal food,—wonderfully little in comparison of the quantity which a person will consume in our colder latitude,—yet they delight in the richest flocks; and their meat, which, according to their favourite cookery, being cut into kobab or small pieces, is usually swimming in an ocean of fat broth; or, when roasted, the fattest piece is set apart for the purpose. 'Roasted meat, however, is,' as La Roque informs us, 'almost peculiar to the tables of the princes and great men; and lambs stewed whole are stuffed with bread, flour, raisins mixed with additional fat, salt, pepper, and a variety of aromatic herbs. But meats, boiled and cut into small pieces, are most common, and these are accompanied with preparations of rice, flour, parsley, and various spices.' It is this last that constitutes the pottage or savoury meat mentioned in Scripture, which, according to Dr Russel, is 'always greasy, either with fat or butter; pretty well seasoned with salt and spices; many of them made sour with the juice of pomegranates or lemons, and onions and garlic complete the seasoning; whilst others, again, season it with sweetmeats, almonds, raisins, and pistachios.' The same taste prevailed amongst the ancient Israelites, and hence the Psalmist, to express the high and exquisite delight he felt in the spiritual provision of the sanctuary, compares it to the satisfying enjoyment of 'marrow and fatness.'‡]

* Matth. xxii. 1. † Prov. xv. 17.

‡ Psalm lxiii. 5. [Homer represents the widow of Hector contrasting the destitute state of her son Artyanax, with the happier period, when on his father's knee he was indulged with crumbs of marrow and the fat of sheep.]—*Editor.*

Among the delicacies at an eastern meal, a prominent place is assigned to honey.* The sacred writers often allude to butter and honey, in their glowing descriptions of the prosperity which rewarded the faithful adherence of their people to the service of God, or the happiness which should distinguish the reign of Messiah. Of this we have a striking example in the prophecies of Isaiah, in which he foretels the ruin of Syria, and the kingdom of the ten tribes, and the speedy deliverance of Judah from their oppression :—'Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know (rather, when he shall know) to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before this child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.'† Thus, in the sixteenth verse, the prophet assigns a plain reason why the child should eat butter and honey, the food of plentiful times, when he should be capable of distinguishing between good and evil, because the country of the two kings, who now distressed Judah, was before then to be laid waste; and that highly favoured kingdom, rescued from the grasp of her enemies, should recover her wonted prosperity. Butter and honey are also mentioned in the book of Joshua, as the enjoyments of a state of plenty :—'The Lord sware unto their fathers, that he would give us a land flowing with milk and honey.' These articles of provision, therefore, naturally denote the plenty which the people of Judea were to possess on the return of peace. In a subsequent verse, they express an abundance arising from the thinness of the population; but that they denote abundance in consequence of the

* The term honey is used loosely by the orientals. The juice of grapes, of pomegranates, and particularly of the palm-tree, when made into a kind of syrup, of which they are fond, is called honey, as well as the produce of bees.—*Editor.*

† Isaiah vii. 14-16.

destruction of their enemies, is evident, because otherwise this deliverance is not mentioned; and that a deliverance was intended in these words, is plain, from calling the child which should be born, Immanuel, God with us. It is also proved by the charge which was previously given to the prophet, to announce that deliverance, which he does from the third to the seventh verse; and to his declaration in this manner, the prophecy must undoubtedly be conformable. In the same way Jarchi interprets the passage:—That infant shall eat butter and honey, because our land shall be full of all good. The heathen poets also consider these articles as delicate food, and among the gifts of prosperity.* The account which is given in the gospel, of the diet of John the Baptist, may be thought a strong objection to this view; he lived on locusts and wild honey; and his life is represented by our Lord as the very reverse of that enjoyed by courtiers and people of fashion, nay, as very different from his own; whence it may be inferred, that the food on which he subsisted was of the coarsest kind. But the inspired narrative only expresses the great simplicity in which he lived; and that he contented himself with what nature offered him in those lonely retreats.

Butter and honey are still reckoned among the greatest delicacies which the East affords; for when D'Arvieux travelled in Palestine, an Arabian prince, who lived in great splendour, and treated him with much kindness, entertained him with little loaves, honey, new churned milk and cream, or leban, more delicate than any he ever saw, together with coffee. And in another place he assures us, that one of the principal

* Thus Callimachus (Hymn. in Jov. 48) tells how Jupiter was kindly nursed with goats' milk and honey; and Homer sung the tender care of Venus, in rearing with honey, milk, and wine, the infant daughters of Pandareus:—

Ορφαναι εν μεγαροισα κομισσε δε δι Αφροδιτη
Τυρω και μελιτι γλυκερω και ηδει οινω.
Odyssey, lib. xx. l. 68, 69.

things with which the Arabs regale themselves at breakfast, is cream, or new butter mingled with honey.* [‘I well remember,’ says Mrs Broughton, ‘having paid several very agreeable visits to Ali’s family at their garden. One in particular is always brought to my recollection, whenever I read of our blessed Saviour, after his glorious resurrection, having asked his disciples for a piece of fish and some honeycomb, of which they had just partaken, and by eating thereof, convincing them, to their great joy, of his personality and identity. For at table, *a dish of fish was often served and eaten with honey;* but the taste did not please me, for, however much I usually liked the excellent cookery of Algerine dishes, I ate it with repugnance.’†]

So grateful was this food to their taste, that it would seem they not unfrequently indulged to excess. It is difficult, on any other supposition, to account for Solomon’s remark :—‘It is not good to eat much honey.’‡ He had before observed, in the same chapter, that an excess in eating honey occasioned sickness and vomiting; and here he returns to the subject, and intimates that such intemperance might be followed by fatal effects.

It is no contemptible proof that the sacred writers were infallibly guided by the Spirit of him who made the heavens and the earth, and all that they contain, that no natural fact connected with their subject escapes their notice. They well knew, and often alluded to the difference between the delicacy of honey in the comb, and after its separation from it. ‘More to be desired,’ said the Psalmist, ‘are the judgments of the

* D’Arvieux Voy. dans la Palest. p. 24; and Russel’s History, vol. i. p. 166.

† Broughton’s Residence in Algiers. Luke xxiv. 22. Fish is used at breakfast, because, in those warm countries, such a perishable commodity will not keep, at certain seasons, above a few hours.—*Editor.*

‡ Prov. xxv. 27.

Lord, than gold, yea, than much fine gold ; sweeter also than honey, yea, than the honey-comb.' Hence, in his estimation, honey in the comb is as much to be preferred to honey after it has been expressed from it, as fine gold to that which is but partially separated from the dross. The accuracy of the inspired writer, in this, as in many other particulars, may be brought to the test of experience ; and whoever has eaten honey in the comb, before the cells have been opened, will then perceive a peculiar delicacy of flavour, which is sought for in vain, after it has been expressed or clarified.*

The shoulder of a lamb well roasted, and covered with butter and milk, is another delicacy, which the orientals greatly value.† This explains the reason why Samuel ordered it to be set before his future sovereign, as well as that which was upon it, — the butter and milk of which the sacred historian takes so particular notice. This was by no means a contemptible dish for a royal entertainment, as some have alleged ; but on the contrary, one of the most delicious which could be set before the future anointed of Jehovah. It appears from the accounts of travellers, that lamb is, in those parts of the world, extremely delicate. One, says Chardin, must have eaten of it in several places of Persia, Media, and Mesopotamia, and of their kids, to form a conception of the moisture, taste, delicacy, and fat of this animal, which, in preference to fish and fowls, they esteem the greatest delicacy ; and it is therefore not without reason, the sacred writers often speak of the lamb and the kid, as the most agreeable food in those countries.

In the Sacred Scriptures, bread and water are commonly mentioned as the chief supports of human life ;

* Harmer's Observ. vol. ii. p. 62.

† Harmer's Observ. vol. ii. p. 79. It is still presented as a proof of regard and ardent hospitality among the modern Arabs,—*Buckingham's Travels*, vol. ii. p. 136.

and to provide a sufficient quantity of water, to prepare it for use, and to deal it out to the thirsty, are still among the principal cares of an oriental householder. To furnish travellers with water is, even in present times, reckoned of so great importance, that many of the eastern philanthropists have been at considerable expense to procure them that enjoyment. The nature of the climate, and the general aspect of the oriental regions, require numerous fountains to excite and sustain the languid powers of vegetation ; and the sun, burning with intense heat in a cloudless sky, demands for the fainting inhabitants the verdure, shade, and coolness, which vegetation produces. Hence fountains of living water are met with in the towns and villages, in the fields and gardens, and by the sides of the roads and of the beaten tracks on the mountains ; and a cup of cold water from these wells is no contemptible present.*

In Arabia equal attention is paid by the wealthy and benevolent, to the refreshment of the traveller. On one of the mountains of Arabia, Niebuhr found three little reservoirs, which are always kept full of fine water for the use of passengers. These reservoirs, which are about two feet and a half square, and from five to seven feet high, are round, or pointed at the top, of mason's work, having only a small opening in one of the sides, by which they pour water into them. Sometimes he found, near these places of Arab refreshment, a piece of a ground shell, or a little scoop of wood for lifting the water.†

The same attention to the comfort of travellers is manifested in Egypt, where public buildings are set apart in some of their cities, the business of whose inhabitants is to supply the passenger with water free of

* Chandler's Travels, &c. p. 20.

† Voy. tome i. p. 274. Mr Buckingham found a structure of the same kind on the Syrian shore between Tyre and Acre.—*Trav.* vol. i. p. 94.

expense. Some of these houses make a very handsome appearance ; and the persons appointed to wait on the passengers, are required to have some vessels of copper, curiously tinned and filled with water, always ready on the window next the street.* Some of the Mohammedan villagers in Palestine, not far from Nazareth, brought Mr Buckingham and his party bread and water, while on horseback, without even being solicited to do so, and when they halted to accept it, both compliments and blessings were mutually interchanged.† Hence a cup of cold water is a present in the East of much value, though there are some other refreshments of a superior quality. When Sisera asked a little water to drink, Jael brought him milk, which she thought he would naturally prefer ; and in the book of Proverbs, the mother of Lemuel instructed him to give strong drink to him that is ready to perish, and wine to those that were of heavy hearts. Still, however, the value of a cup of water, though to be numbered among the simplest presents the traveller can receive, is of great value in those countries. If this be duly considered, the declaration of our Lord, ' Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, in my name,' because ye belong to Christ, ' verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward,'‡ is of greater importance than we are apt at first sight to imagine. The general thought is plain to every reader,—That no service performed to a disciple of Christ, out of love to his Master, although comparatively small, shall remain unrewarded ; but the inhabitants of more temperate climates are sometimes ready to think that the instance which our Lord mentions is rather insignificant. It certainly would not appear so now to an inhabitant of the East; nor did it then, we have reason to believe, appear so to them who heard the Saviour's declaration.§ But the words of Christ evidently contain more than

* Niebuhr's Voy. tom. i. p. 97. † Trav. vol. ii. p. 385.
‡ Mark ix. 41. § See Harmer's Observ. vol. i. p. 398.

this; they lead up our thoughts to the character of Him for whose sake the cup of water is given. An act of benevolence, how small soever, is certainly pleasing in the sight of God, so far as it proceeds from proper motives, is performed in the appointed manner, and directed to the proper end, and particularly if it be connected with the name of his own Son. But to give a cup of water to a disciple in the name of Christ, and because he belongs to him, must signify, that it is given in honour of Christ; and this is the particular reason of the reward which the remunerative justice of God bestows. An article in the Asiatic Miscellany, quoted by Dr Clarke in his edition of Harmer, will set this in a very clear light. In India, the Hindoos go sometimes a great way to fetch water, and then boil it, that it may not be hurtful to travellers who are hot; and after this, stand from morning till night in some great road, where there is neither pit nor rivulet, and offer it in honour of their gods, to be drunk by the passengers. Such necessary works of charity in these hot countries seem to have been practised among the more pious and humane Jews; and our Lord assures them, that, if they do this in his name, they shall not lose their reward. This one circumstance, Dr Clarke justly remarks, of the Hindoos offering the water to the fatigued passengers, in honour of their gods, is a better illustration of our Lord's words, than all the collections of Mr Harmer on the subject.*

It is still the proper business of the females to supply the family with water. From this drudgery, however, the married women are exempted, unless when single women are wanting. The proper time for drawing

* See this curious statement confirmed in Forbes' Orient. Mem. vol. ii. p. 216. Mr Morier found at a fortified pass in Persia, an old Dervish living in a small cell close to the ruined gate, and refreshing the passing stranger with a cup of pure water.—*Trav.* vol. i. p. 107. A cup of water is given to the stranger by the benevolent, by a person appointed for that purpose at a temporary receptacle. —*Forbes' Orient. Mem.* vol. ii. p. 215.

water in those burning climates, is in the morning, or when the sun is going down; then they go forth to perform that humble office adorned with their trinkets, some of which are often of great value. Agreeably to this custom, Rebecca went instead of her mother to fetch water from the well, and the servant of Abraham expected to meet an unmarried female there, who might prove a suitable match for his master's son.

[Rebecca, when she repaired to the well, was in a pastoral country, the manners of which are everywhere simple, and, moreover, she was well known to be the daughter of the great chief of the place, who might, in these circumstances, repair to the well without being accompanied by a protector. But in the neighbourhood of towns, when the young women, on whom the office devolves, go beyond the gates, morning and evening, to draw water, it is not deemed respectable to go otherwise than in groups; and hence the very improper conduct of the woman of Samaria, in appearing at the well alone, at a time when strangers are wont to make their appearance at such a place of public resort. Only one traveller of dignified mien and of unsullied virtue was found at the village well on that occasion, and the privacy was, by his divine wisdom, improved to greater advantage, than might, humanly speaking, have been practicable, had there been a company of lively young women along with her. But still her going unattended by others of her sex was a gross impropriety; and, to those acquainted with eastern manners, was sufficient to reveal the looseness and profligacy of her character.]

But the liquid on which men of all countries, and in all ages, have set the highest value, is wine. Different sorts of wines are produced in Syria and Palestine, some of which are very indifferent, and others, as the wine manufactured from the grapes of Eshcol, of a very superior taste and flavour. The unrivalled excellence of the wine produced in the vineyards of Lebanon is well known, and Mr Buckingham, who

was treated to some of it even at Nazareth, pronounces it not inferior to the best wines of France.* Sweet wines are much esteemed in the East, because they are grateful to the taste, very exhilarating, and will keep, some of them a long time. They were, therefore, preferred by those addicted to drinking, and commonly selected for the table of kings. The prophet Joel accordingly describes a state of great prosperity, by the mountains dropping down sweet wine. Their inebriating quality is alluded to by the prophet Isaiah in that awful threatening:—'I will feed them that oppress thee, with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine.' The privation of this enjoyment is placed by the prophet Micah among the judgments which God threatened to bring upon his ancient people for their iniquity:—'Thou shalt tread the vintage of sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine.'† The prophet Joel uses the

* The wines of Palestine, from the warmth of the climate were, it is probable, all sweet, as rich grapes, refined under a sun of intense power, are too full of sugar to make dry wines of estimable delicacy. Palestine produced two only, of which the names have reached us. The wine of Lebanon, which is found there at this day, is a boiled wine, made of grapes as large as plums. Hosea says it was perfumed, or sweet scented, probably from the drugs mixed with it to make it more intoxicating. This may be inferred from Song viii. where 'spiced wine' is alluded to, and sufficiently explains what was intended by 'mixed wines' among the Hebrews, as well as similar preparations among the Greeks and Romans. In this way the ancients varied the taste and strength of the product of the vineyard. It is singular to find Solomon describing what Homer, so nearly his contemporary, employs Helen about when he makes her temper the wine of his heroes with drugs. The second wine of the Hebrews, of which any accounts have reached us, is very plainly designated, down nearly to our own time. This is the wine of Helbon, made at Damascus, a sweet rich wine as the name imports, being a derivative from a word signifying 'sweet' or 'fat.' Ezekiel, five hundred and ninety years before Christ, speaks of it as grown at Damascus, and as being part of the merchandize of Tyre. This wine of Tyre, the Helbon of the Hebrews, was known to the Greeks and Romans as the wine of Chalybon, and it was first made at Damascus by the Persians. Helbon wine was anciently so much esteemed in the East as to be the only kind drunk by the kings of Persia.—*Athenæum* 1837.—*Editor.* † Micah vi. 15.

same word, when he threatens to cut off the new, or rather the sweet wine, from the mouth of the drunkards in Israel:—'Awake ye drunkards, and weep, and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new (or as it should be rendered, sweet) wine, because it is cut off from your mouth.'* The original term (*asis*) sometimes denotes *must*, or the newly expressed juice of the grape, before it has undergone the vinous fermentation; but in these passages, it must denote wine, and not *must;* for the latter does not inebriate, but produces a very different effect. In former times this generous and grateful liquor was appropriated to the use of kings and princes, and persons of the first distinction. The Septuagint renders the phrase in the first chapter of the book of Esther, which is, in our translation, 'royal wine in abundance, according to the state of the king,' much and sweet wine, such as the king himself drank. If this idea be well founded, it suggests a reason for the conduct of the soldiers who guarded the cross of our suffering Redeemer; it was, perhaps, in ridicule of his claim to royal authority that they offered him vinegar, or wine in a state of strong acidity, instead of the grateful and generous sweet wines which were presented on the table of kings and princes. Luke testifies, in express terms, that this was done in mockery. His words are, 'And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him and offering him vinegar.' Medicated wine was given to Jewish criminals before their execution, to stupify them, and diminish the sense of pain; but vinegar was offered to Jesus, in order to quicken his painful feelings, and at the same time, in derision of his kingly power.

Red wines were most esteemed in the East. So much was the red colour admired, that when it was too white they gave it a deeper tinge by mixing it with saffron or Brazil wood. By extracting the colour-

* Joel i. 5.

ing matter of such ingredients, the wine may be said to make itself redder; a circumstance which, in Mr Harmer's opinion, Solomon means to express in that proverb, 'Look not on the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.'* The verb is in the Hebrew Middle Voice, or Hithpael form, which denotes an action that turns upon the agent itself, and in this instance imparts great energy to the warning.†

Artificial liquors, or mixed wines, were very common in ancient Italy, and the Levant. The Romans lined their vessels with odorous gums, to give their wines a warm bitter flavour ;‡ and it is said that several nations of modern times, communicate to their wines a favourite relish by similar means.§ In Greece, this is accomplished by infusing the cones of the pine in the wine vats. Hasselquist says they use the sweet scented violet in their sherbet, which they make of violet sugar dissolved in water; the grandees sometimes add ambergris, as the highest luxury and indulgence of their appetite.‖ The prophet Isaiah mentions a mixture of wine and water; but it is evident from the context, that he means to express, by that phrase, the degenerate state of his nation; and, consequently, we cannot infer from it, the use of diluted wine in those countries. It is observed by Thevenot, that the people of the Levant never mingle water with their wine at meals, but drink by itself, what water they think proper, for abating the strength of the wine.¶ While the Greeks and Romans by mixed wine, always understood wine diluted and lowered with water,** the Hebrews, on the contrary, meant by it wine made stronger, and more inebriating, by the addition of powerful ingre-

* Prov. xxiii. 31. † Harmer's Observations, vol. ii. p. 142.
‡ Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. xxiii. cap. 24.
§ Chateaubriand's Travels, vol i. p. 194.
‖ Travels, p. 254. ¶ Travels, part ii. p. 96.
** The Greeks mixed their wine, in Hesiod's time, with three parts of water.—*Opera et Dies.* l. 596.

dients, as honey, spices, defrutum, or wine inspissated, by boiling it down to two-thirds or one-half of the quantity, myrrh, opiates, and other strong drugs. The Greeks were no strangers to perfumed and medicated wines; for in Homer, the far-famed Helen mixed a number of stupifying ingredients in the bowl, to exhilarate the spirits of her guests that were oppressed with grief; the composition of which, the poet says, she learnt in Egypt. Of the same kind was the spiced wine mentioned in the Song of Solomon; and to this day, such wines are eagerly sought by the people of Syria and Palestine. The drunkards in Israel preferred these medicated wines to all others:—'Who hath wo;' said the wise man, 'who hath contentions? who hath sorrow? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.'* Nor were the manners of that people more correct in the days of Isaiah; for he was directed to pronounce a 'wo unto them that rose up early in the morning, that they might follow *strong drink;* that continued until night, till wine inflamed them;'† and such also is the habit of oriental *bons vivans;* for when the Persians commit a debauch, they rise early, and esteem the morning the best time for beginning to drink wine, as they could carry on their excess till night.‡ This ancient custom furnished the holy Psalmist with a highly poetical and sublime image of divine wrath:—'For in the hand of the Lord . . . a cup; and the wine is red; it is full of mixture.'§ The prophet Isaiah uses the same figure in one of his exhortations:—'Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord, the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out.'‖ The worshippers

* Prov. xxiii. 29, 30.
† Isaiah v. 11.
‡ Morier's Travels, vol. i. p. 180.
§ Psalm lxxv. 8.
‖ Isaiah li. 17.

of the beast and his image, are threatened with the same fearful punishment :—'The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation.'* The Jews sometimes acidulated their wine with the juice of the pomegranate ; a custom to which the spouse thus alludes :—'I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate ;' or of wine mixed with the juice of that fruit.† Prepared in this way, it proves a cooling and refreshing draught in the heat of summer, and, by consequence, highly acceptable to an oriental.

The natives of the East keep their wine in earthen jars, from which they have no method of drawing it off pure ; and for this reason, it is commonly in a thick and turbid state, by the lees with which it is mixed.‡ To remedy this inconvenience, they filtrate or strain it through a cloth ; and to this practice the prophet Isaiah plainly alludes :—'And on this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.' The same allusion occurs in our Lord's declaration to the Pharisees :—'Ye strain at (out) a gnat, and swallow a camel.'§ Maimonides, in his treatise of forbidden meats, affords a remarkable illustration of our Saviour's proverbial expression : — 'He who strains wine, or vinegar, or strong drink, and eats the gnats, or flies, or worms, which he hath strained off, is whipped.' In these hot countries, gnats were apt to fall into wine if

* Rev. xiv. 10. [What was meant by the wine of the wrath of God, the cup of his indignation, was not the medicated wines, which were favourites at the tables of the luxurious ; but the cup of wine, containing a powerful infusion of poisonous ingredients, that was administered to criminals ; and the giving of that fatal potion to the worshippers of the beast and his image, implied that they should be destroyed, judicially and without mercy.]—*Editor.*

† Song viii. 2.

‡ D'Arvieux Voy. dans la Palest. pp. 197, 198 ; and Thevenot's Travels, part ii. p. 126.

§ Matt. xxiii. 24.

it were not carefully covered ; and passing the liquor through a strainer, that no gnat or part of one might remain, grew into a proverb for exactness about little matters.*

The Abbe Mariti informs us, that it is a common practice in Cyprus, to change the vessels in which their wine is kept. This is done to improve it ; and he says, nothing tends more to bring it to perfection, than to draw it off into another vessel, provided this is not done until a year after it is put into the casks. Chardin observes, 'they frequently pour wine from vessel to vessel in the East ; for when they begin one, they are obliged immediately to empty it into smaller vessels, or into bottles, or it would grow sour.'† The prophet Jeremiah alludes to this custom in the case of Moab, who had become exceedingly corrupt, during a long course of prosperity :—'Moab has been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and has not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither has he gone into captivity ; therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.' The term which in our translation is rendered lees, properly means preservers, because they preserve the strength and flavour of the wine. All recent wines, after their fermentation has ceased, must be kept on their lees for a certain time, to increase their strength and flavour. When the first fermentation is deficient, they retain a richer and sweeter taste than is natural to them in a true vinous state ; and unless further fermentation is promoted, by continuing them longer on their own lees, they never attain a proper degree of maturity, but run into repeated and ineffectual fermentations, and soon degenerate into a sour liquor. Moab, in like manner, had

* Burder's Orient. Customs, vol. i. p. 282. [The strainers in use consisted of two metal plates, the diameter being about three inches, the lower of which was deep like a soup-plate, while the upper, which was made to fit it, was full of very small holes. The wine thus strained was emptied into the drinking-cups.]—*Editor.*

† Harmer' Observations, vol. ii. p. 155.

been as a nation fully matured, had risen to a high degree of prosperity, and had not suffered the severe trials and calamitous revolutions, which the people of Israel had experienced ; he had not been emptied from vessel to vessel, had not gone into captivity, nor seen his dominions rent into rival kingdoms, but preserved their integrity, their population, and their resources undiminished, or in the figurative language of the prophet, ' his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.'*

The custom of cooling wines with snow, was usual among the eastern nations ; and was derived from the Asiatics and Greeks by the Romans.† The snow of Lebanon was celebrated, in the time of Vitriaco, for its refrigerating power in tempering their wine :—' All summer, and especially in the sultry dog-days, and the month of August, snow of an extremely cold nature, is carried from mount Libanus, two or three days journey, that being mixed with wine, it may make it cold ice. The snow is kept from melting by the heat of the sun, or the warmth of the air, by being covered up with straw.'‡

To this custom, the wise man seems to allude in that proverb :—' As the cold of snow in the time of harvest ; so is a faithful servant to them that send him, for he refreshes the soul of his masters.' The royal preacher§ could not speak of a fall of snow in the time of harvest, as pleasant and refreshing: it must, on the contrary, have been very incommoding, as we actually find it in this country ; he must therefore be understood to mean liquids cooled by snow. The sense then will be :—' As the mixing of snow with wine, in the sultry time of harvest, is pleasing and refreshing ; so, a successful messenger revives the spirit of his master who sent him,

* Jer. xlviii. 11.
† Burder's Oriental Customs, vol. i. p. 134.
‡ Harmer's Observ. vol. ii. pp. 156, 157.
§ Prov. xxv. 13.

and who was greatly depressed from an apprehension of his failure.'*

The hospitality of the present day, in the East, exactly resembles that of the remotest antiquity. The parable of the 'great supper,' is in those countries literally realized.† And such was the hospitality of ancient Greece and Rome. When a person provided an entertainment for his friends or neighbours, he sent round a number of servants to invite the guests; these were called vocatores by the Romans, and κλητωρες by the Greeks. The day when the entertainment is to be given, is fixed some considerable time before; and in the evening of the day appointed, a messenger comes to bid the guests to the feast.‡ The custom is thus introduced in Luke:—'A certain man made a great supper, and bade many; and sent his servant at supper time, to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready.'§ They were not now asked for the first time, but had already accepted the invitation, when the day was appointed; and were, therefore, already pledged to attend at the hour when they might be summoned. They were not taken unprepared, and could not in consistency and decency plead any prior engagement. They could not now refuse, without violating their word, and insulting the master of the feast, and therefore justly subjected themselves to punishment. The terms of the parable exactly accord with established custom, and contain nothing of the harshness to which infidels object.‖

* Jeremiah also refers to the same custom:—'Will a man leave the snows of Lebanon? or shall the flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken? because my people have forsaken me; xviii. 14.—*Editor.*

† Luke xiv. 16. Forbes' Orient. Mem. vol. iii. p. 187.

‡ Thus, when Mr Morier was in Persia, himself and friends were invited to an entertainment by one of the chief men of the place. 'On the day appointed, as is usual in that country, a messenger came to us about five o'clock in the evening, to say that the dinner was ready, and we must come immediately.'—*Editor.*

§ Luke xiv. 17. Morier's Trav. vol. i. p. 142.

‖ This second invitation is often made in the very language of

The Jews did not always follow the same method; sometimes they sent a number of servants among the friends they meant to invite; and, at other times, a single male domestic.* But, in Egypt, according to Hasselquist, a different custom from either of these, was commonly followed. A number of women went about, inviting people to a banquet. Those whom he saw thus employed, were about ten or twelve in number, covered with black veils, according to the custom of that country. They were preceded by four eunuchs; after them, and on the side, were Moors with their usual walking staves. As they walked, they all joined in making a noise, which, he was told, they meant as an expression of joy, but which had nothing joyful or even pleasing in his ear.† The royal preacher seems to allude to this singular custom in these words: Wisdom hath 'sent forth her maidens,' she 'crieth upon the highest places of the city.'‡ In this passage, the invitation is given by a number of female servants, as in Egypt; and it was not a private message, but a kind of public proclamation, in which the table is represented as furnished, and every preparation is made:—'Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither; as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.'§

The Persians send a deputation to meet their guests: this deputation are called openers of the way; and the more distinguished the persons sent, and the greater the distance to which they go, so much greater is the honour.‖ So it is proclaimed; 'Go forth and behold

Scripture:—'Behold I have prepared my dinner; the oxen and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready.'—*Editor.*

* Matthew xxii. 8; and Luke xiv. 17. † Travels, p. 56.

‡ Proverbs ix. 1, &c. § Morier's Travels, vol. i. p. 128.

‖ It is usual for the second invitation to be sent by persons of more distinction than the first. In the tale of Hajji Baba, which gives a graphic picture of Persian manners, the doctor, when he invited the king to an entertainment in his house, went himself to the royal palace to announce that all was ready.—*Editor.*

king Solomon, with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him. The bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him.'

The names of the persons to be invited, were inscribed upon tablets, and the gate was set open to receive those who had obtained them; but to prevent any getting in that had no ticket, only one leaf of the door was left open; and that was strictly guarded by the servants of the family. Those who were admitted, had to go along a narrow passage to the room; and after all who had received tickets of admission were assembled, the master of the house rose and shut to the door; and then the entertainment began.*

The Greeks also issued tickets of admission to their entertainments, although relations often went without invitation.† Our Lord evidently refers to the custom of his own nation, in his answer to one who idly inquired, Are there few that be saved? 'Strive,' said he, 'to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us: and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are.'‡

The first ceremony, after the guests arrived at the house of entertainment, was the salutation performed by the master of the house, or one appointed in his place. Among the Greeks, this was sometimes done

* Morier's Travels, p. 142. Potter's Grecian Antiquities, vol. ii. p. 365, *et seq.*

† Thus, in Homer, the valiant Menelaus went to an entertainment in Agamemnon's tent, without being invited:—

Αυτοματος δε οι ηλθε βοην αγαθος Μενελαος.

Il. lib. ii. l. 408.

It appears from this statement, that the Jews were much stricter in admitting persons to their tables than the Greeks, although both used the formality of written invitations.

‡ Luke xiii. 24.

by embracing with arms around; but the most common salutation was by the conjunction of their right hands, the right hand being reckoned a pledge of fidelity and friendship. Sometimes they kissed the lips, hands, knees, or feet, as the person deserved more or less respect.* The Jews welcomed a stranger to their house in the same way; for our Lord complains to Simon, that he had given him no kiss; had welcomed him to his table with none of the accustomed tokens of respect.†

In Hindostan, when a person of rank and opulence receives a guest, whom he wishes to distinguish by peculiar marks of regard, he pours upon his hands and arms, in the presence of the whole company, a delightful odoriferous perfume, puts a golden cup into his hand, and pours wine into it till it run over; assuring him, at the same time, that it is to him a great pleasure to receive him into his house, and that he shall find under his roof every comfort which he could bestow.‡ The reference to this custom, which, at one time, was probably general throughout the East, in the twenty-third Psalm, is at once beautiful and striking:—'Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest mine head with oil, my cup runneth over.' The Lord had early received the Psalmist into favour; raised him to the highest honours from a very humble condition; and, what was infinitely better, he set before him the inestimable blessings of redeeming love, prepared him by a copious unction of the Holy Spirit to enjoy them, and welcomed him in the most honourable manner, by putting the cup of salvation into his hand, in the presence of all his people, and pouring into it, with unsparing liberality, the wine of heavenly consolation.§

* Odyss. lib. xxi. l. 223, 224. † Luke vii. 44.

‡ Memoirs of Captain Wilson, p. 80.

§ The flat roof of the house is often used, in the East, as the drawing-room in which they receive company, till supper is ready.—*Forbes' Oriental Memoirs*, vol. iii. p. 82.

The ancient Greeks and Romans sat at meals.* Homer's heroes were ranged on separate seats along the wall, with a small table before each, on which the meat and drink were placed.† This custom is still observed in China, and perhaps some other parts of the greater Asia. When Ulysses arrived at the palace of Alcinous, the king displaced his son Laodamas, in order to seat Ulysses in a magnificent chair.‡ The same posture was preferred by the Egyptians and the ancient Israelites. But, afterwards, when men became soft and effeminate, they exchanged their seats for couches, in order to drink with more ease; yet even then, the heroes who drank sitting were still thought entitled to praise; and those who accustomed themselves to a primitive and severe way of living, retained the ancient posture.§ The custom of reclining was introduced from the nations of the East, and particularly from Persia, where it seems to have been adopted at a very remote period. The Old Testament Scriptures allude to both customs; but they furnish undeniable proofs of the sitting posture, long before common authors took notice of the other. It was the custom in Isaac's family to sit at meat; for Jacob thus addressed his aged father: —'Arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me.'‖ At the entertainment which Joseph gave his brethren, on their return to Egypt, they seem to have followed the custom of their fathers; for 'they sat before him, the first-born according to his birth-right, and the youngest according to his

* Æneid, lib. vii. l. 176.

† Στηθ ουτως ες μεσσον, εμης οπανευθε τραπεζης.
Odyssey, lib. xvii. l. 447.
From these words, which the poet puts into the mouth of Antinous, the custom of every one in company eating by himself seems to be clearly ascertained. See also lib. xx. l. 259.

‡ Iliad, lib. ix. l. 220. Odyssey, lib. i. l. 3; lib. vii. et viii.

§ This was done by the cynic philosophers, as we learn from Plautus:—

——— 'potius in subsellio
Cynice accipiemur, quam in lectis.'

‖ Gen. xxvii. 19.

youth.'* In the court of Saul, many ages after this, Abner sat at table by his master's side; and David also had his place allotted to him, which is emphatically called his seat. As this is undoubtedly the most natural and dignified posture, so it seems to have been universally adopted by the first generations of men; and it was not till after the lapse of many ages, and degenerate man had lost much of the firmness of his primitive character, that he began to recline indolently upon his side.

The tables were constructed of three different parts, or separate tables, making but one in the whole. One was placed at the upper end crossways, and the two others joined to its ends, one on each side, so as to leave an open space between, by which the attendants could readily wait at all the three. Round these tables were placed couches, one to each table; each of these was called *clinium;* and three of these being united, to surround the three tables, made the *triclinium.* At the end of each *clinium* was a footstool, for the convenience of mounting up to it. These couches were formed of mattresses, and supported on frames of wood, often highly ornamented; the mattresses were covered with cloth or tapestry, according to the quality of the entertainer. At the splendid feast which Ahasuerus made for the nobles of his kingdom, beds of silver and gold were placed round the tables; and as it is customary in the East to name a thing from its principal ornament, these must have been couches profusely ornamented with the precious metals. To this day, the cushions in the hall of audience, and also in the room for receiving guests in private houses, are placed round the carpet in cases of gold and silver kincob, or of scarlet cloth embroidered: these are occasionally moved into the courts and gardens, and placed under the canopy for the accommodation of company.† Each

* Ch. xliii. 33.

† Esther i. 5, 6. Forbes' Oriental Memoirs, vol. iii. p. 192.

guest inclined the superior part of his body upon his left arm, the lower part being stretched out at length, or a little bent; his head was raised up, and his back sometimes supported with pillows. If several persons lay upon the same bed, then the first lay on the uppermost part, with his legs stretched out behind the second person's back; the second person's head lay below the bosom of the former, his feet being placed behind the third person's back; and the rest in like manner: for though it was accounted mean or sordid at Rome to place more than three or four upon one bed, yet, as we are informed by Cicero, the Greeks used to crowd five, and often a greater number, into the same couch. Persons beloved commonly lay in the bosoms of those that loved them.* And for the same reason, according to the well known custom, the beloved disciple lay in the bosom of his Lord, at the celebration of the passover. The head of the second being opposite to the bosom of the first, if he wanted to speak to him, especially if the thing was to be secret, he was obliged to lean upon his bosom: thus the apostle John, wishing to speak secretly to his Lord, leaned from necessity upon his bosom.† In conversation, those who spoke, raised themselves almost upright, supported by cushions. When they ate, they raised themselves on their elbow, and made use of the right hand;‡ which is the reason our Lord mentions the hand of Judas in the singular number:—'He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.'§ Sometimes the Greeks and Romans used both hands; to which practice the *manus unctæ* of Horace refer.‖

* The fact is thus attested by Juvenal:—

'Cœna sedet, gremio jacuit nova nupta mariti.'

Sat. iii. l. 120.

† John xiii. 23. Potter's Antiq. vol. ii. p. 377. Plin. Epist. iv. p. 22.

‡ Horace, Ode i. l. 27. § Matthew xxvi. 23.

‖ Epist. i. 16, 23. 'Seid Ali,' says Mr Martyn, 'while burying his hand in the dish with the Professor, softly mentioned some more of my objections.'—*Memoir of the Rev Henry Martyn*, p. 386.

But if the custom existed among the Jews, the right hand was commonly used; or at the time when our Lord made that declaration, he and his disciples were using only their right hands.*

At a Grecian entertainment, it was customary to place the guests according to their quality; in Homer, the chief persons had the uppermost seats; and in succeeding ages, a person was appointed that bore the name of (*ονομακλητωρ*) nomenclator, whose business it was to call every guest by name to his proper place. In the heroic ages, they seem to have been placed in long ranks, and the chief persons at the head of each rank on both sides of the tables.†

'When a Persian comes into an assembly, and has saluted the house, he then measures with his eye the degree of rank to which he holds himself entitled; he straightway wedges himself into the line of guests, without offering any apology for the general disturbance which he produces. It often happens that persons take a higher seat than that to which they are entitled. The Persian scribes are remarkable for their arrogance in this respect, in which they seem to bear a striking resemblance to the Jews of the same profession in the days of our Lord.‡ The master of the entertainment has, however, the privilege of placing any one as high in the rank of the assembly as he may choose.' And Mr Morier saw an instance of it at a public entertainment to which he was invited. 'When the assembly was nearly full, the governor of Kashan, a man of humble mein, although of considerable rank,

* The left hand, being reserved for all common purposes, is never used at table, except it be in separating a joint, which, however, from the species of cookery the orientals are fond of, does not often occur.—*Editor.*

† Thus, when Achilles entertained Agamemnon's ambassadors, he placed himself uppermost in one rank, and Ulysses, as the principal ambassador, in the other.—*Odyssey*, lib. iii. l. 389, 469.

——— *αταρ κρεα νειμεν Αχιλλευς,*
Αυτος δ' ἀντιον ιζεν Οδυσσηος, etc.

‡ Mark xii. 34, 35. *Il.* lib. ix. l. 217, 218.

came in and seated himself at the lowest place ; when the master of the house, after numerous expressions of welcome, pointed with his hand to an upper seat in the assembly, to which he desired him to move, and which he accordingly did.' These circumstances furnish a striking and beautiful illustration of the parable which our Lord uttered when he saw how those that were invited, chose the highest places.*

Some who affected a more free and easy way of living, disregarded the usual custom, and desired every man to take the place which pleased him best ; but this licence often failed to produce the sociality and good humour which the entertainer expected, and occasioned disputes among the company, about what were reckoned the most honourable seats. So the proud and ambitious Pharisees acted in the time of our Lord, which drew from his lips that pointed reproof :—' They love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues.'† The master of the family sometimes acted the part of nomenclator among the Jews, assigning to every one his proper place ; for when our Lord, at a public entertainment, ' marked how they chose out the chief rooms,' he put forth a parable to those that were bidden, saying unto them, ' When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him, and he that bad thee and him, come and say to thee, Give this man place, and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.'‡ Eustathius says it was a very ancient custom at Lacedæmon, for the eldest person to go before the rest, to the couches at the common hall, unless the king gave the precedence to another by calling him first. This custom may be traced to a very remote origin ; for thus Joseph ar-

* Luke xiv. 8-11. † Matth. xxiii. 6.

‡ Luke xiv. 7, 8. [Dr Clarke mentions an incident of which he was a witness, at a wedding feast in the house of a rich merchant at Jean d'Acre, where two of the guests, who had seated themselves at the top, were obliged to move lower down.]—*Editor*.

ranged his brethren, according to their age, in a row, on one side of the table ; while the Egyptians sat under him, according to their rank or years, on the other: —'And they sat before him, the first-born according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth ; and the men marvelled one at another.'* They did not marvel that they were seated according to their age, for this appears to have been the established custom even in that remote period ; but how their respective ages were known to Pharaoh's prime minister, who, in their opinion, was an utter stranger to their history.†

Before the Greeks went to an entertainment, they washed and anointed themselves ; for it was thought very indecent to appear on such an occasion, defiled with sweat and dust ; but they who came off a journey, were washed and clothed with suitable apparel in the house of the entertainer, before they were admitted to the feast.‡

The oils used on such occasions, in the palaces of nobles and princes, was perfumed with roses and other odoriferous herbs. They also washed their hands before they sat down to meat.§ To these customary marks of respect, to which a traveller, or one who had no house of his own, was entitled, our Lord alludes in his defence of Mary :—'And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house ; thou gavest me no water for my feet, but she hath washed my feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou

* Gen. xliii. 33. † Potter's Grecian Antiq. vol. ii. pp. 377, 378.

‡ When Telemachus and Pisistratus arrived at the place of Menelaus, in the course of their wanderings, they were immediately supplied with water to wash, and with oil to anoint themselves, before they took their seats by the side of the king.

Ες ρ' ασαμινθους βαντες ευξεστας λουσαντο, etc.

Odyss. lib. iv. l. 48.

§ Potter's Grecian Antiq. vol. ii. pp. 360, 370. Odyss. lib. i. l. 146. —The heralds poured water on the hands of the guests. Lib. x. l. 450; lib. xxi. l. 270. Adam's Rom. Antiq. p. 439. Homer's Iliad, lib. x. l. 575; lib. xxiv. l. 465.

gavest me no kiss; but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.'* Homer mentions it as a custom quite common in those days for daughters to wash and afterwards to anoint the feet of their parents.† The Saviour was in the circumstances of a traveller; he had no home to wash and anoint himself in, before he went to Simon's house, and, therefore, had a right to complain that his entertainer had failed in the respect that was due to him as a stranger, at a distance from the usual place of his residence.

The Jews regularly washed their hands and their feet before dinner; they considered this ceremony as essential, which discovers the reason of their astonishment, when they observed the disciples of Christ sit down at table without having observed this ceremony:—'Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.'‡ After meals, they wash them again; for, says the evangelist, 'the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.'§ When they washed their hands themselves, they plunged them into the water up to the wrists; but when others performed this office for them, it was done by pouring it upon their hands.‖ This was a part of the service which Elisha

* Luke vii. 44. The Jews possessed a native balsam so precious that it sold for double its weight in silver. The tree which produced it, according to Pliny and Strabo, was peculiar to the vale of Jericho, and was more like a vine than a myrtle. [It is said, John xii. 3, that the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. The orientals use perfumes of a strength, and in a profusion, which our countrymen feel it difficult to bear.]—*Editor.*

† Iliad lib. x. l. 577. ‡ Matt. xv. 2. § Mark vii. 3, 4.

‖ The same custom prevailed in Greece, for Homer says the attendants poured water on the hands of their chiefs:

Αυτικα κηρυκες μεν υδωρ επι χειρας εχευαν.
Il. lib. ix. l. 174.

The Hindoos observe the same custom still; one servant holds the

performed for his master Elijah; and in every instance under the law, where water was applied to the body by another, it was done, not by plunging, but by pouring or sprinkling. The ancient Romans also washed before meals; and at public entertainments the attendants supplied the guests with water for their hands:

'Dant famuli manibus lymphas.'—*Æn.* lib. i. l. 700.

According to Virgil's arrangement, this ablution was performed after the guests had taken their places on the purple beds. The feet were washed by their servants or wives; and in order to this, they put off their shoes or sandals before they sat down to meat; and it is probable, they did not resume them till they had finished their meal, and were preparing to leave the apartment.*

In Greece, they seemed to have followed the same rule; and their feet being most exposed, were oftener washed and anointed than other parts of the body; the ablution was generally performed by women, both in the heroic and in later ages. To wash the feet was a mean and servile office, and, therefore, generally performed by the female servants of the family. Thus Ulysses declares to Penelope that it was by no means agreeable to him to have his feet washed; and that not one of her female servants should touch his foot. It was occasionally performed, however, by females of the highest rank; for the daughter of Cleobulus, one of the Grecian sages, and king of Lindus, a city on the south-east part of Rhodes, was not ashamed to

bason, another pours the water upon the master's hands and those of his guests, and a third offers a clean napkin. Forbes' Orient. Mem. vol. ii. p. 397.—It is also the uniform practice in Persia. Hanway's Travels, part iii. ch. 33, vol. i. p. 151.

* The shoes are always taken off previously to reclining;—a thin yellow slipper is sometimes worn in the houses of the great, but this is by no means general, and consequently a disagreeable practice has been induced, from their cross-legged position, of grasping their toes when they sit.—*Editor.*

wash the feet of her father's guests.* And it was customary for them to kiss the feet of those to whom they thought a more than common respect was due; for the daughter of Philocleon, in Aristophanes, washed her father, anointed his feet, and stooping down, kissed them.† Thus Mary acted strictly according to established custom, when at a public entertainment she performed these offices to her Saviour.

The feet of kings and princes in some parts of the East were washed in basons of pure gold. Herodotus informs us that Amasis an Egyptian king had a golden bason in which he and all his guests constantly washed their feet.‡ Persons of inferior station used vessels of silver, earthenware, or wood, according to their wealth. The lower classes among the Jews contented themselves with the last of these, which were of an oblong shape, in which they commonly washed their household utensils. Such it is probable, from all the circumstances stated by the apostle John, was the bason employed by our Lord, when by an act of singular and amazing condescension, he washed the feet of his disciples.

The towel which was used to wipe the feet after washing, was considered through all the East, as a badge of servitude. Suetonius mentions it as a sure mark of the intolerable pride of Caligula, the Roman emperor, that, when at supper, he suffered senators of the highest rank, sometimes to stand by his couch, sometimes at his feet, girt with a towel.§ Hence, it appears, that this honour was a token of the deepest humiliation, which was not, however, absolutely degrading and inconsistent with all regard to decency. Yet our blessed Redeemer did not refuse to give his disciples, and Judas Iscariot himself, that wonderful proof of his love and humility. On the very night in which he was betrayed into the hands of his enemies, while his

* Clementis Alexandrini, Strom. iv. 19.
† Vespis, p. 473.
‡ Lib. ii. cap. 172.
§ C. 26.

thoughts were intensely occupied with the glory which he had with his Father before the creation of the world, to which he knew well he was in a few days to return, triumphant over all his foes, he resolved to neglect no service which might soften the heart of Judas, and confirm and encourage his other disciples in their duty; he condescended to stoop down and wash those feet which had followed him in many a long and fatiguing journey, giving his faithful followers, in that significant action, a pledge of the high honour which awaited them, and the pure and elevated joy which was to cheer their hearts in his service, and crown their labours after they had finished their appointed course.

The example of humility which he set them on this occasion was absolutely incomparable: no instance ever occurred among the Jews of a lord or master washing the feet of his servants or disciples. Besides, the son of God was not ignorant that the Father had committed all things into his hands; and that a name was soon to be given him, at which every knee should bow, and every tongue confess. Yet he did not hesitate to wash the feet of his own servants; proving by this very act, that he 'came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.' Nor did he humble himself to the hosts of heaven; but to sinful and miserable men, and even to his most atrocious betrayer. 'Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God and went to God; he riseth from supper, and laid aside his (upper) garments; and took a towel and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with a towel wherewith he was girded.'*

Among the ancient Hebrews, the master of the family, or chief person in the company, always began the meal with a solemn blessing on the bread and the wine, and then they repeated the twenty-third Psalm. They

* John xiii. 3-5.

took care that after meals there should be a piece of bread remaining on the table. The master of the house ordered a glass to be washed, filled it with wine, and elevating it, said, Let us bless him of whose benefits we have been partaking; the rest answering, Blessed be he who has heaped his favours on us, and by his goodness has now fed us.* Thus the Jews, at their meals —both before and after,—acknowledged the great Source of all good; it is reserved for countless numbers that bear the christian name, to neglect or condemn the reasonable service.†

Public entertainments in the East, are not all conducted in the same way. At Aleppo, the several dishes are brought in one by one; and after the company has eaten a little of each, they are removed;‡ but among the Arabs, the whole provisions are set on the table at once. In Persia, where the last custom is followed, the viands are distributed by a domestic, who takes portions of different kinds out of the large dishes in which they are served up, and lays four or five different kinds of meat in one smaller dish; these are set, furnished after this manner, before the company; one of these smaller dishes being placed before two persons only, or at most three. The same practice obtains at the royal table itself. It is not improbable that the ancient Egyptians treated their guests in a similar way; and, in the entertainment given by Joseph to his brethren, we may discover many points of resemblance. The Persians were placed in a row on one side of the room, without any person before them; a distinct dish, with different kinds of food, was set before every guest; circumstances which entirely correspond with the arrangement of Joseph's entertainment.

The great men of the state are always by themselves,

* The Greeks and Romans also began their feasts with prayers and libations to the gods.—*Editor.*

† The Arabs uniformly follow the same becoming practice.—*Shaw's Travels*, vol. i. p. 419.

‡ Russel's History, vol. i. p. 173.

in the feasts that are made for them, and they are treated with greater profusion; their part of each kind of provision being always double, triple, or a larger proportion of each kind of meat.*

This will enable us to form a more distinct and correct idea of the arrangements at the feast which Joseph made for his brethren :—'They set on provision for him,' as being at the head of the government, 'by himself; and for them by themselves; and for the Egyptians that did eat with him by themselves, because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians,' as it is in modern times among the Persians, Arabians, and Hindoos, to eat with strangers; 'and they sat before him;' Joseph, at the upper end of the hall, his brethren at the bottom, and the Egyptians by the sides, or as formerly remarked, the Hebrews on one side of the hall, and the Egyptians on the other. As a mark of his hospitality, and a token of his regard, 'he took and sent messes unto them from before him; but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs,' that is, he had five times as much of every thing as any of his brethren.† He seems to have distributed to every man his portion, or commanded what should be set before them; a custom which was probably general in Egypt, and which still maintains its ground at ori-

* Forbes' Oriental Memoirs, vol. iii. p. 189. Potter's Grecian Antiquities, vol. ii. p. 387. In Greece, those guests that were entitled to particular respect, or for whom the entertainer felt a more than ordinary regard, were helped to the best parts, and very often to a larger share than the rest of the company. Thus, in the Odyssey, Eumæus gives the chine, which they esteemed the chief part, to Ulysses (Lib. xiv. l. 436); and Agamemnon, in the Iliad, gives the same part to Ajax, as a reward for his services in the war.—Lib. vii. l. 321. See also *Odyssey*, lib. viii. l. 475. And Sarpedon, one of the Lycian kings, is honoured with the first seat, the best share of meat, and full cups:

Εδρη τε κρεασιν τε, ιδε πλειοις δεπαεσσιν.
Il. lib. xii. l. 311.

† Harmer's Observ. vol. ii. p. 100–105.

ental entertainments.* We discover evident traces of it in the conduct of Samuel to the son of Kish :—'And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, set it by thee. And the cook took up the shoulder, and that which was upon it, and set it before Saul.'†

At public entertainments in the courts of eastern kings, many of their nobles have a right to a seat, others are admitted occasionally by special favour. In this sense Chardin understands the dying charge of David to his successor, to show kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and to let them be of those that should eat at his table. He means not that they should eat at his table at every meal, or on every day, but only on days of public festivity. In the same light he views the conduct of the king of Babylon to the captive monarch of Judah :—'Evil-Merodach spake kindly to Jehoiakim, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon ; and changed his prison garments, and he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life.'‡ He received a daily allowance from the king suitable to his high station, and the value which Evil-Merodach had for him ; besides this, he had a seat at all the public entertainments of the court. This custom is still followed in the Persian court, where princes of high rank, although needy and without power, are always treated with great respect. They receive a daily allowance from the king, as Jehoiakim did ; and they obtain a high rank in society, as the same monarch did in the court of the king of Babylon. 'This,' says Mr Morier, 'is in the true spirit of Asiatic hospitality :' [and among the guests entertained along with Mr Morier and his friends, was an old man, a descendent of one of the ancient royal families of Persia, who was seated next to the host, and who, on special occa-

* Forbes' Orient. Mem. vol. iii. p. 187. † 1 Sam. ix. 23, 24.
‡ 2 Kings xxv. 28.

sions, had an appointed seat at the royal table.*] This eastern custom explains the reason why David was not expected at Saul's table, till the day of the new moon; he did not sit at the king's table every day, but according to established usage, he had a right, and was expected to be present in his allotted seat on the day of a public and solemn festival. In the same manner, though Mephibosheth was to sit at David's table on all public occasions, yet he wanted the produce of his lands for food at other times.

It was therefore very proper to mention the circumstances to Ziba, that he might understand it would be necessary for him to bring the produce of the lands to Jerusalem, and in sufficient quantity to support Mephibosheth in a style suitable to the dignity of one who had a right, by the royal grant, to appear at court, and sit at the king's table on public occasions. 'Thou, therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him; and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food to eat; but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread always at my table.'†

The Jewish people, degenerating by degrees into luxurious and expensive habits, displayed, towards the close of their national state, great magnificence in their feasts and public entertainments. The prophet Amos was directed to lift his warning voice against their criminal profusion, in these pointed terms:— 'Woe to them that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; that chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music like David; that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.'‡

* Trav. vol. i. p. 143.

† Harmer's Observ. vol. ii. pp. 105, 106. 2 Sam. ix. 10.

‡ Amos vi. 4-6.

No person in Greece and Italy appeared at an entertainment in black, because it was a colour reserved for times of mourning ; but always in white, or some other cheerful colour, which corresponded with the joyous nature of the occasion.* Such were the garments of salvation in which the people of Israel celebrated their festivals, or entertained their friends. When Solomon brought up the ark of the Lord from the city of David, and placed it between the cherubim in the most holy place, the sons of Asaph, of Heman, and Jeduthun, and their brethren, who conducted the songs in the temple, stood at the east end of the altar, arrayed in vestures of fine linen, the chosen emblem of purity and joy.† The few faithful witnesses that remained in Sardis, and had not defiled their garments, were promised the distinguishing honour of walking with their Saviour in white.‡ And to encourage them in their stedfast adherence to the cause of God and truth, it is added, 'He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment.' On the mount of transfiguration, the raiment of Christ became white as the light ; and in the same garb of joy and gladness the angels appeared at his resurrection.§

While the entertainment was going on, the master of the family, to show his respect for the company, and to prevent the hurtful consequences of indulgence, caused the servants in attendance|| to anoint their heads with precious unguents, and perfume the room by burning myrrh, frankincense, and other odours.¶ Hence the

* Potter's Gr. Antiq. vol. ii. p. 383. Adam's Rom. Antiq. p. 413.

† 2 Chron. v. 12. ‡ Rev. iii. 4. § Matth. xvii. 2. Mark xvi. 5.

‖ Servants stand near the door with their hands crossed on their breast, and their eyes intently fixed on their master, whose nod or wave of the hand is the signal for their instant approach. To this the psalmist alludes, 'As the eyes of servants look into the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden into the hand of her mistress, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God.'—*Editor.*

¶ This usage was quite common in ancient Greece, and from thence was imported into Italy, where it was prized exceedingly by the luxurious Romans; for an abundant store of the sweetest

act of Mary, in anointing the head of her Lord, as he sat at meat in the house of Simon, was agreeable to the established custom of the country, and she did no more on that occasion than what the rules of politeness required from his entertainer. It was at once a signal testimony of her veneration for the Saviour, and a pointed reproof to Simon for his disrespectful omission. 'As Jesus sat at meat, there came a woman, having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard (or liquid nard, according to the margin) very precious, and she brake the box and poured it on his head.' * The balsam was contained in a box of alabaster, whose mouth was stopped with cotton, upon which melted wax was poured, so as effectually to exclude the air. When Mary approached to anoint her Lord, she brake the cement which secured the stopple, not the box itself, for this was quite unnecessary; and we know that, in the language of the East, the opening of a vessel, by breaking the cement that secured it, was called breaking the vessel.†

The entertainment was conducted by a symposiarch, or governor of the feast. He was, says Plutarch, one chosen among the guests, the most pleasant and diverting in the company, that would not get drunk, and yet would drink freely; he was to rule over the rest, to forbid any disorder, but to encourage their mirth.‡

incense is among the highest wishes that Virgil can form for the lover of Pollio:—

'Qui te, Pollio, amat, veniat, quo te quoque gaudet:
Mella fluant illi, ferat et rubus asper amomum.'—Ecl. iii. l. 188.

And its origin is indicated with sufficient clearness by Pliny (Nat. Hist. lib. xxiii. cap. 47), who informs us, that his countrymen used balsam from Judea at their public entertainments. Potter's Gr. Antiq. vol. ii. p. 385.

* Mark xiv. 3.

† See Burder's Orient. Cust. vol. i. p. 282. [Alabaster, a stone of a soft nature and snowy whiteness. Small vases are made of it for holding perfumes. Pliny and others represent it as peculiarly proper for the purpose, and the druggists in Egypt have to this day vessels made of it, in which they keep their medicines and perfumes.—*Forbes.*]—*Editor.*

‡ Among the Romans such a person was chosen by dice; upon

He observed the temper of the guests, and how the wine worked upon them; how every one could bear his wine, and to endeavour accordingly to keep them all in harmony, and in an even composure, that there might be no disquiet nor disturbance. To do this effectually, he first proclaimed liberty to every one to drink what he thought proper, and then observing who among them was most ready to be disordered, mixed more water with his wine, to keep him equally sober with the rest of the company, so that this officer took care that none should be forced to drink, and that none, though left to their own choice, should get intoxicated.* Such, we have reason to believe, was the governor of the feast at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, which our Lord honoured with his presence. The term Αρχιτρικλινος literally signifies the governor of a place furnished with three beds; and he acted as one having authority; for he tasted the wine before he distributed it to the company, which, it is universally admitted, was one of the duties of a symposiarch. Neither the name nor the act accords with the character and situation of a guest; he must, therefore, have been the symposiarch, or governor of the feast. It is admitted he knew not the wine was gone, and that they were at a loss for more; but this only proves that he was not so fully acquainted with the state of matters as he ought to have been, and as such persons commonly were; and, besides, it is easy to discern a secret arrangement of divine Providence, by which the governor of the feast was, in this instance, ignorant of one thing belonging to his office, that the miracle might be attested by an unexceptionable witness, and on his authority made known to the whole company.† But the existence of such an officer among

the sides were painted the names of various gods and goddesses, and he that turned up Venus, was the successful competitor.—*Ed.*

* Potter's Gr. Antiq. vol. ii. p. 386. Adam's Roman Antiq. p. 456.

† John ii. 8, 9.

the Jews, is placed beyond a doubt by a passage in the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus, where his office is thus described :—' If thou be made the master of a feast, lift not thyself up, but be among them as one of the rest ; take diligent care of them, and so sit down. And when thou hast done all thine office, take thy place, that thou mayest be merry with them, and receive a crown for the well ordering of the feast.'*

On this passage, Theophylact remarks, that no one might suspect that their taste was vitiated by having drank to excess, so as not to know water from wine, our Saviour orders it to be first carried to the governor of the feast, who certainly was sober ; for those who, on such occasions, are entrusted with this office, observe the strictest sobriety, that they may be able properly to regulate the whole.†

The same person was called Δαιτρος by the Greeks, and *Diribitor* among the Romans, because it belonged to him to divide and distribute to every guest his portion. In primitive times, the master of the feast carved for all his guests ; and the custom of distributing to every man his share, is derived by some from the ages when the Greeks left off their ancient way of living upon acorns, and learned the use of corn, which, being at first very scarce, gave occasion to continual quarrels. To prevent these disorders, it was agreed that a person should be named, to make a fair division of the harvest among the inhabitants. But it is more probable that the founders of the Grecian states brought the custom along with them from Asia: for Solomon certainly alluded to it in his description of a virtuous woman :—' She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.'‡

Some of the eastern nations drink their wine after meat, but others before, which accounts for the difference of language among the inspired writers on this

* Ecclesiast. xxxii. 1. † Burder's Oriental Customs, vol. i. p. 324.
‡ Proverbs xxxi. 15. Potter's Grecian Antiq. vol. ii. pp. 387, 388.

subject. The inhabitants of Syria and Canaan reserved their wine till the feast was over; which seems also to have been the custom in Egypt; for when Joseph entertained his brethren, he 'took and sent messes of victuals from before him;' and after they had dined, and not till then, 'they drank and were merry with him.' A different custom, however, prevailed in Persia, where the time for drinking wine was in the beginning, not at the close, of the entertainment. Olearius thus describes a solemn banquet at the Persian court:—'The floor of the hall was covered with a cotton cloth, which was covered with all sorts of fruits and sweetmeats in basins of gold. With them was served up excellent Shiras wine. After an hour's time the sweetmeats were removed, to make way for the more substantial part of the entertainment, such as rice, boiled and roasted mutton, &c. After having been at table an hour and a half, warm water was brought in an ewer of gold for washing; and grace being said, they began to retire without speaking a word, according to the custom of the country.' It is probably to the same people that Chardin refers in his observations on the banquet which Esther prepared for the king and Haman: the eastern people drink and discourse before eating; and after the rest is served up, the feast is quickly over, as they eat very fast, and every one presently withdraws. It was, perhaps, for this reason the entertainment given by Esther is called, not a feast, but uniformly a banquet of wine; because wine was the first course at the table of a Persian monarch, and occupied a much larger portion of time than all the others. They sat, according to Olearius, an hour at this wine; but only half an hour at the more substantial part of the feast.*

The oriental banquet, in consequence of the intense heat, is often spread upon the verdant turf, beneath the shade of a tree, where the streaming rivulet sup-

* Harmer's Observations, vol. ii. p. 152.

plies the company with wholesome water, and excites a gentle breeze to cool their burning temples. The vine and the fig, it appears from the faithful page of inspiration, are preferred on such joyous occasions :—'In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig-tree.'* 'To fountains, or rivers,' says Dr Chandler, 'the Turks and the Greeks frequently repair for refreshment, especially the latter on their festivals, when whole families are seen sitting on the grass, and enjoying their early or evening repast, beneath the trees by the side of a rill.'† And we are assured by the same author, that in such grateful retreats they often give public entertainments. He visited an assembly of Greeks, who, after celebrating a religious festival, were sitting under half tents, with store of melons and grapes, besides lambs and sheep to be killed, wine in gourds‡ and skins, and other necessary provisions. Such appears to have been the feast Adonijah gave his friends at Enrogel.§ It was held near a well or fountain of water, and there 'he slew sheep, and oxen, and fat cattle, and invited his brethren' and the principal people of the kingdom. Enrogel was not chosen for secrecy, for it was in the vicinity of the royal city. It was not a magnificent cold collation ; the animals on which they feasted were, on the contrary, killed and dressed on the spot for this princely repast. In Hindostan, feasts are 'given in the open halls and gardens, where a variety of strangers are admitted, and much familiarity is allowed. This easily accounts for a circumstance in the history of Christ, which is attended with

* Zech. iii. 10.

† Travels, p. 21. See, in confirmation of this very ancient custom, Hesiod, Opera et Dies, l. 589, 593. Lady M. W. Montagu's Letters, vol. i. p. 195.

‡ Gourds are still used in the East for holding quantities of wine for present consumpt. — *Chandler.* It is probable, as these are easily procured, that, when David is said to have furnished each of the people at the bringing up of the ark, with a flagon of wine, the gourd is meant.—*Editor.*

§ 1 Kings i. 9.

considerable difficulty; the penitent Mary coming into the apartment, and anointing his feet with the ointment, and wiping them with the hairs of her head. This familiarity is not only common, but far from being deemed either disrespectful or displeasing.'*

More effectually to screen the company from the burning sun-beam, a large canopy was spread upon lofty pillars, and attached by cords of various colours: —'Some of these awnings,' says Forbes, 'belonging to the Indian emperors, were very costly, and distinguished by various names. That which belonged to the emperor Akber was of such magnitude as to contain ten thousand persons; and the erecting of it employed one thousand men for a week, with the help of machines; one of these awnings, without any ornaments, cost ten thousand rupees.'† Similar to these were the splendid hangings under which Ahasuerus, the king of Persia, entertained his court. They 'were white, green, and blue, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble.'‡

On these joyous occasions, any person that happens to pass by, is invited to join the company, and share in their enjoyments. The beauty of the scene tends to elevate and open their hearts, and to produce kind and generous affections, which prompt them to welcome the weary traveller to their society. To such invitations, the prophet seems to refer:—'In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour, under the vine and under the fig-tree.'§ Ye shall invite your neighbours, and the traveller that happens to pass by, to the pleasures of your retirement, and to share, under the shade of the vine and the fig-tree, the exuberant bounties of heaven. As the words of the prophet evidently refer to a state of high prosperity which the chosen people were to enjoy, they cannot naturally be understood to mean a call for re-

* Forbes' Oriental Memoirs, vol. iii. pp. 183, 190.
† Ibid. pp. 191, 192. ‡ Esther, i. 5, 6. § Zech. iii. 10.

lief, to those who were sitting at their repast under the shade of the trees, but an invitation to those that passed by to share in their comforts. [And, accordingly, a recent traveller tells us, some families who were sitting in the shade of a few trees, by a rill of water, invited him and his friends to alight and partake of their refreshments. The prevalence of such rural scenes, and the kindly hospitality that distinguished them, indicated a period of prosperity, safety, and peace, very different from that which, a little while before, Israel had experienced :—'Son of man,' said God to Ezekiel, 'I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem; and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment. They shall eat their bread with carefulness, and drink their water with astonishment; that her land may be desolate from all that is therein, because of the violence of them that dwell therein.'*]

Many of the Arabs, and other eastern people, use no spoon in eating their victuals; they dip their hands into the milk, which is placed before them in a wooden bowl, and lift it to their mouth in their palm. Le Bruin observed five or six Arabs, on the side of the Nile, dipping their morsel in a bowl of milk together, as he was going up that river to Cairo;† D'Arvieux says they eat their pottage in the same way;‡ [and Jowett says, that all the guests in the family where he resided, helped themselves out of one dish, it being no uncommon thing to see the hands of four or five Arabs in it at one time. 'I would not have noticed,' he continues, 'so trivial a circumstance, if it did not exactly illustrate what the evangelists record of the Last Supper,—"He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me." From this it may be inferred, that Judas sat near to our Lord; perhaps on one side next to him. John, who was leaning on Jesus' bosom, describes the fact, with an additional

* Ezek. iv. 16, 17. † Vol i. p. 586. ‡ Voy. dans la Palest. p. 205.

circumstance: upon his asking, "Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it; and when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon." When the master of the house found in the dish any choice morsel, he took it out, and applied it to my mouth. This was true Syrian courtesy, and had I been sufficiently well bred, my mouth would have opened to receive it. On my pointing to the plate, however, he had the goodness to deposit the dainty bit there.' 'This manner,' says another traveller, 'with the fingers, is more delicate than may be imagined by those who have not witnessed it. Each person breaks off a small piece of bread, dips it in the dish, and conveys it to his mouth; or he merely sops his morsel in the dish, and hands a particular morsel to his nearest neighbour.'*] Is it not reasonable to suppose, says Harmer, that the same usage obtained anciently among the Jews; and that Solomon refers to it when he says, 'A slothful man hides his hand in the dish, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.' Our translators render it the bosom; but the word every where signifies a pot or dish. The meaning, therefore, according to Harmer is, 'the slothful man having lifted up his hand full of milk or pottage to his mouth, will not do it a second time; no, though it be actually dipped into the milk or pottage, he will not submit to the fatigue of lifting it again from thence to his mouth.'† But as it is rather a caricature to represent the sluggard as so excessively indolent or lazy, that he will rather let his hand lie in the dish among the milk or pottage, than lift it to his mouth a second time, the explanation of Dr Russel is to be preferred:—'The Arabs, in eating, do not thrust their whole hand into the dish, but only their thumb and two first fingers, with which they take up the morsel, and that in a

* Lane's Modern Egyptians, vol. i. p. 177.
† Harmer's Observations, vol. ii. p. 49-54.

moderate quantity at a time. I take, therefore, the sense to be, that the slothful man, instead of taking up a moderate mouthful, thrusts his hand into the pillaw, or such like, and takes a handful at a time, in order to avoid the trouble of returning frequently to the dish.'* According to this view, the slothful man endeavours by one effort to save himself the trouble of continued exertion. It seems to have been adopted by the Arabs, as much for the sake of despatch as from necessity ; for D'Arvieux says, a man would eat upon very unequal terms with a spoon, among those that, instead of them, use the palms of their hands. This mode of drinking was used by three hundred men of Gideon's army :—' And the number of them that lapped, putting their hands to their mouth, were three hundred men ; but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.'† Three hundred men, immediately on their coming to the water, drank of it in the quickest manner they could, by lifting it in their palms, and lapping it like a dog, that they might be ready, without delay, to follow their leader to the battle : the rest took up water in pitchers, or some kind of vessel, and bending down upon their heels and knees, or with their knees placed upright before them, either of which might be called bowing their knees to drink, they handed these drinking vessels slowly from one to another, as at an ordinary meal; an act which procured their dismission. The Hottentot manner of drinking water from a pool, or stream, seems exactly to coincide with the mode adopted by the three hundred, and gives a very clear idea of it : They throw it up with their right hand into their mouth, seldom bringing the hand nearer than the distance of a foot from the mouth, and so quickly, that however thirsty, they are soon satisfied. Mr Campbell, who had an opportunity of seeing this operation, when

* Harmer's Observations, vol. ii. p. 50, Dr Clarke's note.
† Judges, vii. 6.

travelling among that people, frequently tried to imitate it, but without success.*

The oriental feast has been, from time immemorial, enlivened with music † and dancing.‡ In Turkey it is still concluded with coffee and perfumes, and a dance by the female slaves.§ In the heroic ages, dancing was reckoned an amusement so becoming persons of honour and wisdom, that the Grecian poets give Apollo the title of the dancer, from his fondness for this diversion; and represents the supreme Jupiter himself, as by no means reluctant to display his agility in this way :—

Μεσσοισιν δ' ωρχειτο πατηρ ανδρωντε Θεωντε.

At Rome, the custom was quite different, for there, to use the words of Cicero, *Nemo fere saltat sobrius, nisi forte insanit, &c.* 'No man dances unless he is either drunk or mad, either in private, or at a modest and decent entertainment; dancing is the very last effect of luxury and wantonness.' Even in Greece, where dancing was numbered among the liberal sciences, wanton and effeminate dances were condemned as indecent in men of wisdom and character. This amusement was not withheld from God's ancient people; but it was confined chiefly to the female sex, who seem, in every

* Campbell's Travels, p. 112.

† The eastern vocal music has no melody in it. Frequently, and in what is considered the highest effort of art, it consists in shakes and tremulous quavers of the voice, as long as the breath will serve, and this is all that is meant by the Alleluia. Even when they do chant a continued song, their music, says Niebuhr, is not of the same character with ours. It is grave and simple, without any complexity of modulation. The singers to gratify the national taste are obliged to sing slowly, that the sense of the words maybe understood. Airs of that simplicity are easily learned by heart. The orientals, accordingly, use no notes, but sing by the ear. In my voyage up the Nile, I joined with the sailors in singing songs by alternate couplets, in which they compared their mistresses to the cucumbers of Damascus, and the eyes of the gazelle, and praised their beautiful yellow hands and red nails.—*Editor.*

‡ Lady M. W. Montagu's Letters, vol. i. p. 212.

§ Potter's Grecian Antiquities, vol. ii. pp. 400, 401. Forbes' Oriental Memoirs, vol. i. p. 81. D'Arvieux Voy. dans la Palest. p. 249.

instance mentioned in Scripture, to have enjoyed it by themselves. The men and women of Israel never mingled in the dance, so far as the writer can perceive from the sacred history, except on one occasion, when they worshipped the golden calf. Nor is the view now given contradicted by our Lord's allusion, in the parable of the prodigal son; for he only mentions music and dancing, without saying a word about the mode; we have therefore a right to conclude, that he referred to the established custom of his people.*

But the highest pleasure which the ancients experienced at their feasts, arose from agreeable conversation. In the opinion of the ancient Greeks, says Athenæus, 'it was more requisite and becoming to gratify the company by agreeable conversation, than with variety of dishes.' And, in the heroic ages, as Plutarch observes, it was usual to consult about affairs of the greatest importance at public feasts; hence Nestor persuades Agamemnon to invite the Grecian commanders to an entertainment, in order to deliberate concerning the management of the war.† The Spartan youth frequented the public tables, as the schools of temperance and prudence, where they heard discourses of public affairs, and conversed with the most liberal and best accomplished masters. The same custom obtained in several other cities of Greece, in Persia, and other oriental states.‡ This partly accounts for the discourses which our Lord delivered, and the interesting conversations he maintained, at public entertainments. It is not to be supposed, that the Son of God and the Redeemer of men would suffer any favourable opportunity of doing good to escape, without improving it to the very best advantage; but when he graciously drew the attention of his company to matters of the deepest interest, he availed himself of a custom familiar to every part of the East.

* Luke xv. 25. † Il. lib. ix. l. 70.
‡ Potter's Grecian Antiquities, vol. ii. p. 406.

It was also customary to unbend their mind by turns, and divert them from serious affairs, by discourses on ludicrous subjects; but no pastime was more common than that of proposing and answering difficult questions. The person who solved the question was honoured with a reward; he who failed in the attempt suffered a certain punishment; both the rewards and penalties were varied, according to the disposition of the company.* That the custom of proposing riddles was very ancient, and derived from the eastern nations, appears from the story of Samson, in the book of Judges, who proposed one to the Philistines at his nuptial feast. Nor were these questions confined to entertainments, but, in the primitive times, were proposed on other occasions, by those who desired to make proof of another's wisdom and learning. Agreeably to this custom, the queen of Sheba came to prove Solomon 'with hard questions.'†

When the company were ready to separate, a servant entered and sprinkled them profusely with rose water, as a valedictory mark of his master's regard. In some places this was done at the beginning of the entertainment, and was considered as a cordial welcome. Mr Bruce informs us, that when he rose to take his leave of an eastern family, he 'was presently wet to the skin, by deluges of orange-flower water.'‡ 'The first time,' says Niebuhr, 'we were received with all the eastern ceremonies (it was at Rosetta, at a Greek merchant's house), there was one of our company who was excessively surprised, when a domestic placed himself before him; and threw water over him, as well on his face as over his clothes.' It appears from the testimony of both these authors, that this is the customary mode of showing respect and kindness to a guest in the East.§ The prophet Isaiah seems to refer to this

* Potter's Gr. Antiq. vol. ii. p. 408. † 1 Kings x. 1.

‡ Travels, vol. iii. p. 14.

§ The Hindoos observe the same custom, according to Mr Forbes. Oriental Memoirs, vol. ii. p. 12; and vol. iii. pp. 176, 181.

custom, in a passage where he describes the character and functions of the Messiah :—' So shall he sprinkle many nations ; the kings shall shut their mouths at him.'* As the Father's chosen servant, he shall appear in the fulness of time, to display his infinite love, and impart the blessings of salvation, through his own blood, to the children of men. He shall welcome them to the feast of the gospel, by the effusion of his holy Spirit ; and when they bid adieu to the courts of God's house on earth, he will see them again, and refresh their departing souls with ' showers of blessing.' The kings and princes of the earth, shall fall down in silent wonder and astonishment before him, and all nations shall serve him.†

The entertainer occasionally dismissed his guests with costly presents. Lysimachus of Babylon, having entertained Hemerus the tyrant of the Babylonians and Seleucians, with three hundred other guests, gave every man a silver cup, of four pounds weight. When Alexander made his marriage feast at Susa in Persia, he paid the debts of all his soldiers out of his own exchequer, and presented every one of his guests, who were not fewer than nine thousand, with golden cups.‡ The master of the house among the Romans, used also to give the guests certain presents at their departure, or to send them after they were gone, to their respective habitations.§ It is probable that this custom, like many others which prevailed in Greece and Rome, was derived from the nations of Asia ; for the sacred writers allude repeatedly to a similar custom, which closed the religious festivals or public entertainments among the chosen people of God. When David brought up the ark from the house of Obededom, into the place which he had prepared for it, he offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before the Lord. And so soon as

* Isaiah lii. 15. † See Taylor's Calmet, vol. iii.
‡ Potter's Grecian Antiq. vol. ii. p. 410.
§ Adam's Roman Antiquities, p. 446.

the solemnity was finished, 'he dealt among all the people, even among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine.'*

Their ardent hospitality did not permit them to forget their relations and acquaintances that happened to be detained from their public banquets, by personal or domestic afflictions, or any other cause. To such persons it was the custom to send a part of what remained from the feast. Nehemiah alludes to this kind and generous usage, in his charge to the people :—'Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared.' Another instance of this custom occurs in the book of Esther :—'Therefore the Jews made the fourteenth day of the month Adar, a day of gladness and feasting, and a good day, and of sending portions one to another.'† The command of Nehemiah to send portions to those for whom nothing was prepared, has been generally understood to mean the poor; but as it was not a private feast, but a national festival, in which the poor and the rich were equally concerned, it cannot, with propriety, be restricted to the former, but ought to be understood of all such as were unavoidably absent, and particularly of those that were in a state of mourning. In the last instance, their sending portions one to another, is expressly distinguished from gifts to the poor, in a following verse,‡ and, therefore, cannot have the same meaning.§ An oriental prince sometimes honours a friend or a favourite servant, who cannot conveniently attend at his table, by sending a mess to his own home. When the grand emir found that it incommoded D'Arvieux to eat with him, he po-

* 2 Sam. vi. 19. † Esth. ix. 19. ‡ Verse 22.

§ The practice of sending a portion to the poor, prevailed as early as the days of Job; for we find that patriarch alluding to his own well known benevolence to his less favoured neighbours :—'If I have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof;' xxxi. 17.—*Editor.*

litely desired him to take his own time for eating, and sent him what he liked from his kitchen at the time he chose.* And thus, when David, the king of Israel, pretended, for secret reasons, too well known to himself, that it would be inconvenient for Urijah to continue at the royal palace, he dismissed him to his own house; 'and there followed him,' says the historian, 'a mess of meat from the king.'

The women are not permitted to associate with the other sex at an eastern banquet; but they are allowed to entertain one another in their own apartments. When Ahasuerus, the king of Persia, treated all the people of his capital with a splendid feast, Vashti, the queen, we are informed, 'made a banquet for the women in the royal house, which belonged to king Ahasuerus.' This, observes Chardin, is the custom of all the East; the women have their feasts at the same time, but apart from the men. And Maillet informs us in his letters, that the same custom is observed in Egypt.† This is undoubtedly the reason why the prophet distinctly mentions 'the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride;'‡ he means that the noise of nuptial mirth was heard in different apartments. The personal voices of the newly married pair cannot be understood, but the noisy mirth which a marriage feast commonly excites; for in Syria, and probably in all the surrounding countries, the bride is condemned to absolute silence, and fixed by remorseless etiquette to the spot where she has been seated.§ When the banquet was finished, and the guests had removed, the poor came in and eat up the fragments, so that nothing was lost.‖ [It is customary in eastern countries, contrary to all our ideas of propriety, for men of rank to admit persons of inferior station to enjoy the hospitality of their tables,—a practice which has arisen from

* D'Arvieux Voy. dans la Palest. pp. 20, 21.
† Lett. x. p. 79. ‡ Jer. xxv. 10. § Russel's Hist. vol. ii. p. 48.
‖ Forbes' Oriental Memoirs, vol. iii. pp. 187, 190.

the impossibility of preserving the fragments of one meal to another; and so far is this practice carried, that families of the first class gratify themselves by giving invitations to the poorest and most wretched mendicants in the neighbourhood. Sir John Malcolm relates that a friend of his, while breakfasting with the late prime minister of Persia, was surprised to hear him invite a shoemaker to sit down at the table. Pococke mentions, that at an entertainment given by an Egyptian governor, the guests rose in succession, till, when they had finished, the poor were admitted to eat up the fragments that remained. But a much more minute account of this truly oriental practice is given by Mr Roberts, who has described an entertainment of this kind in so lively and interesting a manner, that we subjoin it in his own words:—'When an eastern grandee has resolved on making a feast for one or two hundred guests, he despatches messengers into the lanes and the streets to inform the indigent that on such a day rice and curry will be given to all who are there at the appointed time. Long before the hour, the visitors may be seen bending their steps towards the house of the nobleman: there goes the old man, who is scarcely able to move his palsied limbs; there the widow moves her hesitating steps; there objects suffering under every disease of our nature, congregated together, without a single tie of association, except the one which occupies their expectations. The food is ready, the guests are ranged in rows on the grass, and the servants begin to hand out the portions in order. Such is the hunger of some that they cannot stay to let the mess cool; others, on whom disease or age has made a fatal inroad, can scarcely lift it to their mouths. What a strange scene! Some are bawling for more food, though they are already gorged to the full; others are talking of another feast which is to be given in another village on the morrow; while others, who have got a sight of the host, are applauding his gene-

rosity, and pouring the grateful flattery into his ear.'*] This custom will account for the command to the servants, in the parable of the supper, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.'† These poor and destitute persons were called to the entertainment only before the time, when, according to the custom of the country, they were expected to attend.

* Oriental Illustrations. † Luke xiv. 21-23

CHAPTER VI.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE FROM THE MARRIAGE CEREMONIES OF THE EAST.

Among the Jews, the state of marriage was, from the remotest periods of their history, reckoned so honourable, that the person who neglected, or declined to enter into it, without a good reason, was thought to be guilty of a great crime.*

The Jews did not allow marriageable persons to enter into that honourable state without restriction; the high priest was forbidden by law to marry a widow, and the priests of every rank, to take a harlot to wife, a profane woman, or one put away from her husband. To prevent the alienation of inheritances, an heiress could not marry but into her own tribe. The whole people of Israel, being a holy nation, separated from all the earth to the service of the true God, and to be the depositaries of his law, were forbidden to contract matrimonial alliances with the idolatrous nations in their vicinity. To check the licentiousness of the human heart, and to distinguish the chosen people from

* Such a mode of thinking was not confined to them. In several of the Grecian states, marriage was held in equal respect; it was greatly encouraged by their laws, and the neglect of it discountenanced or punished. The Lacedæmonians subjected to severe penalties those men who deferred, or wholly abstained from marrying. The Athenians enacted a law, by which all who were entrusted with public affairs, were to be married, and have children and estates; for these were regarded as so many pledges of their good behaviour.—Potter's Grecian Antiq. vol. ii. p. 263.

the heathen around them, who were exceedingly dissolute in their manners, and betrayed a violent propensity to marry their nearest relations, certain degrees of affinity were fixed by divine authority, within which the conjugal relation was not to be formed. Since it pleased the Creator to make of one blood the whole human race, it was not possible in the first generations of our family, to avoid the intermarriage of very near relations. The Jewish writers maintain that marriage, within the degrees of affinity, was not forbidden before the giving of the law, that with one's own mother, or step-mother, or the sister of the same mother excepted. An incident in the history of Abraham seems to corroborate this opinion. When Abimelech, the king of Gerar, complained that the patriarch had imposed upon him by calling Sarah his sister, when she was in reality his wife, the latter replied :—'And yet indeed she is my sister : she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother ; and she became my wife.'*

Among the Jews, a young man might be given in marriage after he had completed his thirteenth year and one day ; and a virgin when she was twelve years old and one day ; but the males were commonly married at the age of eighteen. In Italy, the age of puberty or marriage was from fourteen for men, and twelve for girls.† In Persia, girls were declared marriageable at nine, and boys at thirteen, years of age.‡ Girls, it is said, are married at nine years of age, and sometimes mothers at thirteen.§ What is yet more remarkable, they are sometimes mothers at eleven, grandmothers at twenty-two, and past child-bearing at thirty.‖

The marriage engagement of a minor, without the knowledge and consent of the parents, was of no force ;

* Gen. xx. 12. The same liberty was claimed in other parts of the world.

† Adam's Rom. Antiq. p. 451.

‡ Chardin's Trav. vol. iii. p. 409.

§ Niebuhr's Travels, p. 63.

‖ Shaw's Trav. vol. i. p. 434.

so sacred was the parental authority held among the people of God.*

This custom appears to have been derived from a very remote antiquity; for when Eliezer of Damascus went to Mesopotamia to take a wife from thence unto his master's son, he disclosed the motives of his journey to the father and brother of Rebecca;† and Hamor applied to Jacob and his sons, for their consent to the union of Dinah with his son Shechem.‡ Samson also consulted his parents about his marriage; and entreated them to get for him the object of his choice.§ The right of the parents, in all ordinary cases, to dispose of both their sons and their daughters, under the law, is recognized in many parts of the Old Testament; but it appears from the conduct of Samson, that it was not absolute in every case, for when his parents objected to his choice, he renewed his suit in a more peremptory tone:—'Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me, for she pleaseth me well.'

In Mesopotamia, the younger daughter could not be given in marriage before the elder. This rule of conduct Laban pleaded as his excuse for substituting Leah in the place of Rachel:—'It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the first-born.' The existence of this rule, and its application to practice, in those parts of the world, is confirmed by the Hindoo law, which makes it criminal to give the younger daughter in marriage before the elder; or for

* Grecian virgins were not allowed to marry without the consent of their parents. In Persia, the female is betrothed by the parents; she may, however, refuse her consent; and the marriage cannot proceed if she continues averse to it.—Malcolm's Hist. of Persia, vol. ii. p 589.

† Gen. xxiv. 34. ‡ Gen. xxxiv. 6. § Judges xiv. 3.

a younger son to marry while his elder brother remains unmarried.*

Marriage is evidently meant, by scripture and reason, to be the union of one man with one woman. When God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone,' he promised him the help only of a single mate:—'I will make him an help-meet for him.'† This gracious promise he soon performed, in the formation of one woman; a clear intimation of his will, that only one man and one woman should be joined in wedlock. This design Adam recognized, and acknowledged in express terms; and his declaration was certainly meant as a rule for his descendants in every succeeding age:—'Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh.' These quotations, which are all couched in terms of the singular number, are inconsistent with the doctrine of polygamy. The original appointment was confirmed by our Lord in these words:—'Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning, made them male and female; and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh.'‡ The apostle is not less decisive in his direction to the churches:—'Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife; and let every woman have her own husband.'§ But though the law is so decisive, it cannot be doubted that polygamy was introduced soon after the creation; Lamech, one of the descendants of Cain, and only the sixth person from Adam, married two wives; he was probably the first who ventured, in this respect, to transgress the law of his Maker. This unwarrantable practice, derived from the antediluvian world, seems to have

* Maurice's Indian Antiq. vol. vii. p. 838. Gen. xxix. 26. Halhed's Preface to the Gentoo Laws, p. 69.
† Gen. ii. 18. ‡ Matt. xix. 4. § 1 Cor. vii. 2.

become very common soon after the flood; for it is mentioned as nothing remarkable, that Sarah, when she despaired of having children, took her handmaid Hagar, and gave her to Abraham her husband, by whom she had a son. Both Esau and Jacob had a number of wives; and that is undoubtedly one of the practices which Moses suffered to remain among his people, because of the hardness of their hearts, prohibiting only the high priest to have more than one wife.

Every transgression of the divine law is attended by its corresponding punishment. Polygamy has proved in all ages, and in all countries where it has been suffered, a teeming source of evil. The jealousy and bitter contentions in the family of Abraham, and of his grandson Jacob, which proceeded from that cause, are well known; and still more deplorable were the dissensions which convulsed the house and shook the throne of David. Such mischiefs are the natural and necessary effects of the practice; for polygamy divides the affections of the husband, and by consequence, generates incurable jealousies and contentions among the unhappy victims of his licentious desires. To prevent his abode from becoming the scene of unceasing confusion and uproar, he is compelled to govern it, as the oriental polygamist still does, with despotic authority, which at once extinguishes all the rational and most endearing comforts of the conjugal state. The husband is a stern and unfeeling despot; his harem, a group of trembling slaves. The children espouse, with an ardour unknown to those who are placed in other circumstances, the cause of their own mother, and look upon the children of the other wives as strangers or enemies. They regard their common father with indifference or terror; while they cling to their own mother with the fondest affection, as the only parent in whom they feel any interest, or from whom they expect any suitable return of attention and kindness. This state of feeling

and attachment is attested by every writer on the manners of the East ; and accounts for a way of speaking so common in the Scriptures :—'It is my brother, and the son of my mother.' 'They were my brethren,' said Gideon, 'the sons of my mother : as the Lord liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you.'* It greatly aggravated the affliction of David, that he had become an alien to his mother's children ;† the enmity of his brethren, the children of his father's other wives, or his more distant relatives, gave him less concern :—'I am become a stranger to my brethren, and an alien to my mother's children.' 'I behaved,' says the Psalmist, 'myself as though he had been my friend or brother ; I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.'‡ 'Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother, and thou slanderest thine own mother's son.'§ The same allusion occurs in the complaint of the spouse :—'Look not upon me because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me : my mother's children were angry with me ; they made me the keeper of the vineyards.'‖ The children of one wife scarcely looked upon the children of the other wives as their brothers and sisters at all ; and they scarcely felt more regard for their father. An oriental, in consequence of this unnatural practice, takes little notice of an insult offered to his father ; but expresses the utmost indignation when a word is spoken to the disadvantage of his mother. To defame or to curse her, is the last insult which his enemy can offer ; and one which he seldom or never forgives. 'Strike,' cried an incensed African to his antagonist, 'but do not curse my mother.'¶

Marriage-contracts seem to have been made in the primitive ages with little ceremony. The suitor him-

* Judges viii. 19.
† Psalm lxix. 8.
‡ Psalm xxxv. 14.
§ Psalm l. 20.
‖ Song i. 6 ; see also ch. viii. 1, 2.
¶ Park's Trav. vol. i. p. 264.

self, or his father, sent a messenger to the father of the woman, to ask her in marriage. Abraham sent the principal servant of his household, with a considerable retinue and costly presents, to the city of Nahor, to take a wife unto his son Isaac, from among his relations. The father of the suitor sometimes solicited the person whom he had chosen for his wife; for Hamor, the father of Shechem, went out unto Jacob, to treat with him about the marriage of Dinah to his son, the heir of his house, and the hope of his family. If the woman resided under her father's roof, the parents were consulted, and their consent obtained; and then the damsel was asked if she agreed to the proposal. The servant of Abraham stated the design of his journey to Bethuel and Laban, the father and brother of Rebecca, and solicited their consent; and when they had agreed to his request, they said,—'We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth. And they called Rebecca, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? and she said, I will go.'

[The following curious anecdote shows that the same custom still exists, and is familiarly acted upon by the people of Armenia. 'The Nestorian patriarch Abraham, for that was his name, who was in the place of a father to his younger brother Isaac, being desirous of procuring a wife for his foster son, sent his most trusty steward to a distant part of the country to obtain one from among his own people. The servant took with him jewels and raiment for the future wife of Isaac, and presents for her near relatives. He was no less prosperous than the servant of his master's namesake, the ancient patriarch Abraham. But, though I became acquainted with all the parties in the case, I must leave the reader's imagination to fill up some of the incidents; only let him substitute mules for camels (which are not used in this mountainous country), and I may refer to the close of the twenty-fourth chapter of Genesis for the sequel. The damsel was brought to the house of

this modern patriarch, and "Isaac took her, and she became his wife, and he loved her." ' *]

The kings and nobles of Israel were not more ceremonious on these occasions. When David heard that Nabal was dead, he sent messengers to Abigail to solicit her hand in marriage :—'And they spake unto her, saying, David sent us unto thee to take thee to him to wife. And she arose and bowed herself on her face to the earth, and said, Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.'† After the death of Urijah, the same prince sent and fetched Bathsheba to his house, and she became his wife. This entirely corresponds with the mode in which the oriental princes generally form their matrimonial alliances. The king of Abyssinia 'sends an officer to the house where the lady lives, who announces to her, that it is the king's pleasure she should remove instantly to the palace. She then dresses herself in the best manner, and immediately obeys. Thenceforward he assigns her an apartment in the palace, and gives her an house elsewhere, in any part she chooses. The nearest resemblance to marriage is when he makes her *iteghe*, or queen; for whether in the court or in the camp, he orders one of the judges to pronounce in his presence, that he, the king, has chosen his handmaid, naming her, for his queen; upon which the crown is put upon her head, but she is not anointed.' ‡

In the remote ages of antiquity, women were literally purchased by their husbands; and the presents made to their parents or other relations were called their dowry.§ Thus, we find Shechem bargaining with Jacob and his sons for Dinah :—'Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me, I will give: Ask me never so much dowry and gift,

* Beni Israel, p. 244.
† 1 Sam. xxv. 40, 41.
‡ Bruce's Travels, vol. iv. p. 487.
§ Potter's Grecian Antiq. vol. ii. p. 272.

and I will give according as ye shall say unto me; but give me the damsel to wife.' * The practice still continues in the country of Shechem; for when a young Arab wishes to marry, he must purchase his wife; and for this reason, fathers, among the Arabs, are never more happy than when they have many daughters. They are reckoned the principal riches of a house. An Arabian suitor will offer fifty sheep, six camels, or a dozen of cows; if he be not rich enough to make such offers, he proposes to give a mare or a colt; considering in the offer, the merit of the young woman, the rank of her family, and his own circumstances.† When they are agreed on both sides, the contract is drawn up by him that acts as cadi or judge among these Arabs.‡ In some parts of the East, a measure of corn is formally mentioned in contracts for their concubines, or temporary wives, besides the sum of money which is stipulated by way of dowry. This custom is probably as ancient as concubinage, with which it is connected; and if so, it will perhaps account for the prophet Hosea's purchasing a wife of this kind, for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley.§

When the intended husband was not able to give a dowry, he offered an equivalent. The patriarch Jacob, who came to Laban with only his staff, offered to serve him seven years for Rachel; a proposal which Laban accepted. This custom has descended to mo-

* Gen. xxxiv. 12.

† In the primitive times of Greece, a well-educated lady was valued at four oxen. Iliad. lib. xxiii. l. 706.

‡ In Persia, the contract of marriage is the deed by which the wife is entitled to her dower, which is the principal part of her provision, in the event of her husband's death, and her sole dependence if she is divorced. It is made payable from her husband's property; and if he has none, the wife's portion is secured upon whatever he may hereafter possess. The dower is made over to the female or her assigns, before the consummation of marriage, and becomes her entire right.—*Sir John Malcolm's Hist.* vol. ii. p. 500.

§ De la Roque Voy. dans la Palest. p. 222.

dern times; for in Caubul the young men who are unable to advance the required dowry, 'live with their future father-in-law, and earn their bride by their services, without ever seeing the object of their wishes.'* Saul, instead of a dowry, required David to bring him an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, under the pretence of avenging himself of his enemies. This custom has prevailed in later times; for in some countries they give their daughters in marriage to the most valiant men, or those who should bring them so many heads of the people with whom they happen to be at war. It is recorded of a nation in Caramania, that no man among them was permitted to marry, till he had first brought the head of an enemy to the king. Aristotle admits,† that the ancient Grecians were accustomed to buy their wives; but they no sooner began to lay aside their barbarous manners, than this disgusting practice ceased, and the custom of giving portions to their sons-in-law was substituted in its place. The Romans also, in the first ages of their history, purchased their wives; but afterwards, they required the wife to bring a portion to the husband, that he might be able to bear the charges of the matrimonial state more easily.

The contract of marriage was made in the house of the woman's father, before the elders and governors of the city or district. Among the Romans, the articles of the marriage-contract were written on tables and sealed.‡ The manner of contracting or espousing was various. Sometimes the man put a piece of money into the woman's hand before witnesses, and said, Be thou espoused to me according to the law of Moses and Israel; or it was done by writing, which was no more than writing the same words with the woman's name, and delivering it to her before witnesses; or lastly, by cohabitation, when the law obliged the man to marry

* Elphinstone's Caubul, book ii. ch. 3. † Politic, lib. ii. cap. 8.
‡ Adam's Roman Antiquities, p. 463.

her whom he had dishonoured, if her father gave his consent.*

The espousals by money, or a written instrument, were performed by the man and woman under a tent or canopy erected for that purpose. Into this chamber the bridegroom was accustomed to go with his bride, that he might talk with her more familiarly; which was considered as a ceremony of confirmation to the wedlock. While he was there, no person was allowed to enter; his friends and attendants waited for him at the door, with torches and lamps in their hands; and, when he came out, he was received by all that were present with great joy and acclamation. To this ancient custom, the Psalmist alludes in his magnificent description of the heavens :—'In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun; which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.'†

A Jewish virgin, legally betrothed, was considered as a lawful wife; and, by consequence, could not be put away without a bill of divorce. And if she proved unfaithful to her betrothed husband, she was punished as an adulteress; and her seducer incurred the same punishment as if he had polluted the wife of his neighbour. This is the reason that the angel addressed Joseph, the betrothed husband of Mary, in these terms: —'Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the holy Ghost.' The evangelist Luke gives her the same title :—'And Joseph also went up from Galilee unto Bethlehem, to be taxed, with Mary his espoused wife.'‡

* They had also several forms of betrothing in Greece; of which one is quoted by Clemens of Alexandria, out of Menander:—'I give you this my daughter, to make you father of children lawfully begotten.' According to Xenophon, the dowry was sometimes mentioned; for when Cyaxares betrothed his daughter to Cyrus, he addressed him in these words:—'I give you, Cyrus, this woman, who is my daughter, with all Media for her dowry.'—*Cyropæd.* lib vii. p. 311.

† Psalm xix. 4, 5.

‡ Matt. i. 20.

Ten or twelve months commonly intervened between the ceremony of espousals, and the marriage; during this interval, the espoused wife continued with her parents, that she might provide herself with nuptial ornaments suitable to her station. This custom serves to explain a circumstance in Samson's marriage, which is involved in some obscurity:—'He went down,' says the historian, 'and talked with the woman (whom he had seen at Timnath), and she pleased him well.' These words seem to refer to the ceremony of espousals; the following, to the subsequent marriage:—'And after a time he returned to take her.'* Hence, a considerable time intervened between the espousals, and their actual union.

From the time of the espousals, the bridegroom was at liberty to visit his espoused wife in the house of her father; yet neither of the parties left their own abode during eight days before the marriage; but persons of the same age visited the bridegroom, and made merry with him. These circumstances are distinctly marked in the account which the sacred historian has given us of Samson's marriage:—'So his father went down unto the woman, and made there a feast; for so used the young men to do. And it came to pass when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.'† These companions were the children of the bride-chamber, of whom our Lord speaks:—'Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?'‡

An eastern bride submitted to various purifications, before the celebration of her nuptials. The numerous candidates among the beauties of Persia, for the dignity of queen-consort to Ahasuerus, were prepared 'six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things, for the purifying of the women.' It was a custom among the ancient Jews, to adorn the married couple with bridal crowns,

* Judges xiv. 7, &c. † Judges xiv. 10. ‡ Matthew ix. 15.

which were generally of gold, made in the form of a tower. We discover this usage in the invitation of the spouse to her companions, 'Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon, with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.'* And in the compliment of the bridegroom :—'Thine head upon thee is like Carmel,' rising with the tower-shaped crown, like that mountain in shape ; and rough with jewels as that mountain is with protuberances.† The prophet Isaiah makes an allusion to the same custom, where he celebrates, in strains of rapturous pleasure, the future prosperity of Zion :—'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments;' literally, decketh himself with a crown.‡

The marriage ceremony was commonly performed in a garden, or in the open air ; the bride was placed under a canopy, supported by four youths, and adorned with jewels according to the rank of the married persons ; all the company crying out with joyful acclamations, Blessed be he that cometh. It was anciently the custom, at the conclusion of the ceremony, for the father and mother, and kindred of the woman, to pray for a blessing upon the parties. Bethuel and Laban, and the other members of their family, pronounced a solemn benediction upon Rebecca before her departure ;

* Song iii. 11.

† Song vii. 5. See Taylor's Calmet, vol. iii. 1 hund. p. 89, and 2 hund. p. 147.

‡ Isaiah lxi. 10. The Greeks were decked with garlands of various herbs and flowers on their marriage-day. The hair of a Roman bride was also crowned with flowers, after being divided into six locks with the point of a spear.—*Potter's Grecian Antiquities*, vol. ii. p. 285. *Adam's Roman Antiquities*, p. 464. This very ancient practice of crowning the bridegroom and the bride, has been continued among the members of the Greek church in Egypt, to our own times.

—'And they blessed Rebecca, and said unto her, thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions; and let thy seed possess the gate of those that hate them.'* And in times long posterior to the age of Isaac, when Ruth the Moabitess was espoused to Boaz,—'All the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said we are witnesses: The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house, like Rachel, and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel; and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem.'† After the benediction, the bride is conducted, with great pomp, to the house of her husband; this is usually done in the evening;‡ and as the procession moved along, money, sweetmeats, flowers, and other articles, were thrown among the populace, which they caught in cloths made for such occasions, stretched in a particular manner upon frames. The use of perfumes at eastern marriages is common; and upon great occasions very profuse. Not only are the garments scented, till, in the Psalmist's language, they smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia: it is also customary for virgins to meet, and lead the procession, with silver gilt pots of perfumes; and sometimes aromatics are burned in the windows of all the houses in the streets through which the procession is to pass, till the air becomes loaded with fragrant odours. In allusion to this practice it is demanded, 'Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness, like pillars of smoke perfumed with myrrh and frankincense?'§ So liberally were these rich perfumes burned on this occasion, that a pillar of smoke ascended from the censers, so high, that it could be seen at a considerable distance; and the perfume was so rich, as to equal in value and fragrance all the powders of the merchant. The custom of burning perfumes on these occasions, still continues in the East;

* Gen. xxiv. 60.
† Ruth iv. 11, 12.
‡ Niebuhr's Trav. vol. i. pp. 147, 148.
§ Song iii. 6.

for Lady Mary Wortley Montague, describing the reception of a young Turkish bride at the bagnio, says, 'Two virgins met her at the door; two others filled silver gilt pots with perfumes, and began the procession, the rest following in pairs to the number of thirty. In this order they marched round the three rooms of the bagnio.'* And Maillet informs us, that, when the ambassadors of an eastern monarch, sent to propose marriage to an Egyptian queen, made their entrance into the capital of that kingdom, the streets through which they passed were strewed with flowers; and precious odours burning in the windows, from very early in the morning, embalmed the air.†

A similar custom is observed among the Hindoos. The husband and wife, on the day of their marriage, being both in the same palanquin, go about seven and eight o'clock at night, accompanied with all their kindred and friends; the trumpets and drums go before them; and they are lighted by a number of flambeaux; immediately before the palanquin, walk many women, whose business it is to sing verses, in which they wish them all manner of prosperity. They march in this equipage through the streets, for the space of some hours, after which they return to their own house, where the domestics are in waiting. The whole house is illuminated with small lamps; and many of those flambeaux, already mentioned, are kept ready for their arrival, besides those which accompany them, and are carried before the palanquin.‡ These flambeaux are composed of many pieces of old linen, squeezed hard against one another in a round figure, and thrust down into a mould of copper. The persons that hold them in one hand, have in the other a bottle of the same metal with the copper mould, which is full of oil, which they take care to pour out from time to time upon the

* Letters on Turkey, vol. i. p. 262. † Lett. v.

‡ Maurice's Hist. of Hindostan, vol. vii. p. 561; and Forbes' Orient. Mem. vol. iii. p. 251.

linen, which otherwise gives no light.* A Jewish marriage seems to have been conducted in much the same way; for in that beautiful Psalm, where David describes the majesty of Christ's kingdom, we meet with this passage:—'And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favour. The king's daughter is all-glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needle-work; the virgins, her companions that follow her, shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace'.† In the parable of the ten virgins, the same circumstances are introduced:—'They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried,' leading the procession through the streets of the city, the women and domestics that were appointed to wait his arrival at home, 'all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.'‡

But among the Jews, the bridegroom was not always permitted to accompany his bride from her father's house; an intimate friend was often sent to conduct her, while he remained at home to receive her in his apartment. Her female attendants had the honour to introduce her; and whenever they changed the bride's dress, which is often done, they presented her to the bridegroom. It is the custom, and belongs to their ideas of magnificence, frequently to dress and undress

* Forbes' Orient. Mem. vol. ii. p. 417. The Greek and Roman ladies also were led home to their husbands in the evening by the light of torches.

† Psal. xlv. 12, &c. ‡ Matth. xxv. 6.

the bride; and to cause her to wear on that same day all the clothes made up for her nuptials. For the same reason, the bridegroom's dress is less frequently changed.* These circumstances discovered the propriety and force of John's language, in his magnificent description of the Jewish church in her millennial state:—'And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.'†

Those that were invited to the marriage, were expected to appear in their best and gayest attire. If the bridegroom was in circumstances to afford it, wedding garments were prepared for all the guests, which were hung up in the antechamber for them, to put on over the rest of their clothes, as they entered the apartments where the marriage-feast was prepared. To refuse, or even to neglect putting on the wedding garment, was reckoned an insult to the bridegroom, aggravated by the circumstance that it was provided by himself for the very purpose of being worn on that occasion, and was hung up in the way to the inner apartment, that the guests must have seen it, and recollected the design of its suspension. This accounts for the severity of the sentence pronounced by the king, who came in to see the guests, and found among them one who had neglected to put it on:—'And he saith unto him, friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless,' because it was provided at the expense of the entertainer, and placed full in his view. 'Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'‡

The arrival of the bride at the house of her husband, was followed by the marriage feast, at which they indulged in great mirth and hilarity. It was made en-

* D'Arvieux Voy. dans la Palest. p. 225.
† Revelations xxi. 2. ‡ Matthew xxii. 11.

tirely at the expense of the bridegroom.* From the parable of the marriage-feast, we have a right to conclude that such entertainments among the Jews were equally free. 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding.'†

The marriage feast was of old, frequently protracted to the length of seven days; for so long Samson entertained his friends at Timnath.‡ To this festival, Laban is thought by many divines to refer, in his answer to Jacob's complaint, that he had imposed Leah upon him instead of Rachel:—'Fulfil the week of the marriage, and we will give thee this also.' This feast was called the nuptial joy, with which no other was to be intermixed; all labour ceased while it continued, and no sign of mourning or sorrow was permitted to appear. It may be only further observed, that even in modern times, none but very poor people give a daughter in marriage without a female slave for a handmaid, as hired servants are scarcely known in the oriental regions.§ Hence Laban, who was a man of considerable property in Mesopotamia, 'gave unto his daughter Leah, Zilpah his maid, for an handmaid;' and 'to Rachel his daughter, Bilhah his handmaid, to be her maid.'‖ On the third day, the bride presented her bridegroom with a robe; gifts were likewise made to the bride and bridegroom, by the bride's father and

* Thus Homer sings:

Ειλαπιν ηε γαμος, επει ουκ ερανος ταδε γ' εσιν.

'A shot-free banquet, or a marriage feast,
Not such as is by contribution made.'
Potter's Grecian Antiquities, vol. ii. p. 288.

† Matthew xxii. 2, 3. ‡ Judges xiv. 12.

§ Chardin's MS. note. Harmer's Observ. vol. iv. p. 294.

‖ Gen. xxix. 24, 29. See also Odyss. lib. xxiii. l. 27, 28. In Greece also, the marriage solemnity lasted several days. [In like manner Hagar was Sarah's handmaid, and Rebecca was accompanied to the house of Isaac by her nurse.—*Editor.*]

friends; these consisted of golden vessels, beds, couches, plates, and all sorts of necessaries for housekeeping, which were carried in great state to the house by women, preceded by a person carrying a basket, in the manner usual at processions, before whom went a boy in white vestments, with a torch in his hand. It was also customary for the bridegroom and his friends to give presents to the bride, after which, the bridegroom had leave to converse freely with her, and she was permitted to appear in public without her veil.* The money, says Dr Russel, which the bridegrooms of Aleppo pay for their brides, is laid out in furniture for a chamber, in clothes, jewels, or ornaments of gold, for the bride, whose father makes some addition, according to his circumstances: which things are sent with great pomp to the bridegroom's house three days before the wedding.† In Egypt, these gifts are carried on the marriage day, immediately before the bride.‡ To these circumstances the holy psalmist certainly refers, in his magnificent description of Messiah's kingdom :—'And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favour' with gifts and offerings suited to their wealth and thy dignity.§

The apartments of the women are counted sacred and inviolable, over all the East; it is even a crime to inquire what passes within the walls of the harem, or house of the women. Hence, it is extremely difficult to be informed of the transactions in those sequestered habitations; and a man, says Chardin, may walk an hundred days, one after another, by the house where the women are, and yet know no more what is done there than at the farther end of Tartary. This sufficiently explains the reason of Mordecai's conduct,

* Potter's Grecian Antiq. vol. ii. p. 295.
† History, vol. i. pp. 284, 285.
‡ Maillet, Lett. x. p. 86.
§ Psalm xlv. 12.

who 'walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know how Esther did, and what should become of her.'*

The Arabs are not so scrupulous as the Turks about their women; and though they have their harem, or women's apartment in the tent, they readily introduce their acquaintances into it, or those strangers whom they take under their special protection. Pococke's conductor, in his journey to Jerusalem, led him two or three miles to his tent, where he sat with his wife and others round a fire. The faithful Arab kept him there for greater security, the wife being always with him; no stranger ever daring to come into the women's apartment, unless specially introduced. We discover in this custom, the reason of Jael's invitation to Sisera, when he was defeated by Barak:—'Turn in, my Lord, turn in to *me*, fear not.'† She invited him to take refuge in her own division of the tent, into which no stranger might presume to enter; and where he naturally supposed himself in perfect safety.‡

The married women among the orientals, are reduced to a state of great subjection.§ In Barbary, they regard the civility and respect which the politer nations of Europe pay to the weaker sex, as extravagance, and so many infringements of that law of nature, which assigns to man the pre-eminence. The matrons of that country, though they are considered indeed as servants of better station, yet have the greatest share of toil and business upon their hands. While the lazy husband reposes under some neighbouring shade, and the young people of both sexes tend the flocks, the wives are occupied all the day long, either in toiling on their looms, or in grinding at the mill, or in preparing bread or other kind of farinaceous food. Nor is this all; for to finish the day, 'at the time of the evening,' to use the words of the sacred

* Esther ii. 11.
† Judges iv. 18.
‡ Travels, vol. ii. p. 5.
§ Shaw's Travels, vol. i. p. 432.

historian, 'even at the time that women go out to draw water,' they must equip themselves with a pitcher or goat's skin, and tying their sucking children behind them, trudge out in this manner, two or three miles, to fetch water. In Palestine, where the women of superior rank, at least, are treated with more respect, the married ladies commonly express their submission and regard, by kissing the beards of their husbands. To such a state of connubial society, the psalmist seems to allude in these words:—'So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him.' *

In the kingdom of Algiers, the women and children are charged with the care of their flocks and herds, with providing food for the family, cutting fuel, fetching water, and when their domestic affairs allow them, with tending their silk worms. The daughters of the Turcomans in Palestine, are employed in the same mean and laborious offices.† It is probable the cutting of wood was another female occupation. The very great antiquity of these customs, is confirmed by the prophet Jeremiah, who complains that the children were sent to gather wood for idolatrous purposes; and in his Lamentations, he bewails the oppressions which his people suffered from their enemies, in these terms:—'They took the young men to grind, and the children fell under the wood.'‡

Hence the servile condition, to which the Gibeonites were reduced by Joshua for imposing upon him and the princes of the congregation, appears to have been much more severe than we are apt at first to suppose:—'Now, therefore, ye are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood, and drawers of water for the house of my God.'§

* Psalm xlv. 11.

† In Homer, Andromache fed the horses of her heroic husband.—*Iliad.* lib. viii. l. 187.

‡ Lam. v. 13. § Joshua ix. 23.

The bitterness of their doom did not consist in being subjected to a laborious service, for it was the usual employment of women and children; but in their being degraded from the characteristic employment of men, that of bearing arms, and condemned with their posterity for ever to the employment of females.

In ancient Greece, the women were strictly confined within their lodgings, especially young women and widows; of whom the former, as having less experience in the world, were more closely watched. Their apartment was commonly well guarded with locks and bolts; and sometimes they were so straitly confined, that they could not pass from one part to another without permission. New married women were almost under as strict a confinement for a time; but when once they had brought forth a child, they commonly enjoyed greater liberty. This indulgence, however, was entirely owing to the kindness of their husbands; for those who were jealous or morose, kept their wives in perpetual imprisonment. But how gentle and kind soever husbands might be, it was considered as very indecent for women to go abroad.* To these long-established ideas of propriety, as well as to the intrinsic fitness of the custom, the apostle Paul undoubtedly had respect in his directions to the churches in Greece and its vicinity:—'And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busy bodies, speaking things which they ought not. I will, therefore, that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.'† He draws the attention of Titus to the same subject:—

* Euripides accordingly says:—

Ενδον γυναικων και πας' οικεταις λογας.

'Women should keep within doors, and there talk.'

Potter's Grecian Antiq. vol. ii. p. 310.

† 1 Timothy v. 13, 14.

'That they (the aged women) may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, discreet, chaste, *keepers at home*, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.'* A Jewess was not so much confined; but still it was deemed improper for her to appear much in public; for in Hebrew she is called *Almah*, from a verb which signifies to hide or conceal, because she was seldom or never permitted to mingle in promiscuous company. The married women, though less restrained, were still expected to keep at home, and occupy their time in the management of their household. In the book of Proverbs, the wise man states it as a mark of a dissolute woman, that 'her feet abide not in her house;'† while 'every wise woman,' by her industrious and prudent conduct, 'buildeth her house.' 'She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.'‡

Oriental women suffer little from parturition; for those of better condition are frequently on foot the day after delivery, and out of all confinement on the third day. 'They seldom call midwives, and when they do, they are sometimes delivered before they come to their assistance; the poorer sort, while they are labouring or planting, go aside, deliver themselves, wash the child, lay it in a clout, and return to work again.' The same facility attended the Hebrew women in Egypt; and the assertion of the midwives seems to have been literally truth:—'The Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them.'§

When a child was brought into the world, the ancient Greeks washed it with water; in Callimachus, the mother of Jupiter, as soon as he saw the light, sought

* Tit. ii. 4, 5. † Prov. vii. 11. ‡ Prov. xiv. 1; xxxi. 27.
§ Exod. i. 19. Morier's Trav. vol. i. pp. 106, 107; and Forbes' Oriental Memoirs, vol. iii. p. 256.

for some clear brook to purify the body of so dear a progeny :—

Αυτικα διζητο ῥοον ὑδατος ὡ κε τεκοιο
Αυματα χυτλωσαιτο τεον δ' ενε χρωτα λοεσσαι.*

The next action deserving of notice, is cutting the child's navel, which was done by the nurses ; whence originated the proverbial saying among the Greeks, 'thy navel is not cut,' meaning, you are an infant, and scarce separated from your mother. Then the nurse wrapped the child in swaddling bands, lest its tender and flexible limbs should be distorted. When a son is born, some confidential servant is usually the first to carry the glad tidings to his master, and obtains a gift, to which he reckons himself entitled. But the birth of a daughter produces no rejoicings ; on the contrary, every one is as backward to inform the father of it, as they were forward on the birth of a son. To this circumstance the prophet alludes with great force and beauty :—'Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man-child is born unto thee, making his heart very glad.'† Weakly or deformed children, the Lacedæmonians ordered to be cast into a deep cavern, thinking it neither for the good of the children themselves, nor for the public interest, that they should be brought up ; but many persons exposed their children, when they were not willing they should perish, only because they were unable to maintain them. Children were commonly exposed in their swaddling clothes, and laid in a vessel ; thus, Ion was exposed by Creusa, and Moses by his mother, when she could conceal him no longer. The parents frequently tied jewels and rings to the children they exposed, or any thing else by which they might afterwards discover them, if Providence took care of their safety ; or to encourage such as found them, to nourish and educate

* Hymno in Jovem. v. 14.
† Jer. xx. 15. Morier's Travels, vol. i. p. 104.

them if alive, or to give them human burial if dead.* These circumstances the prophet Ezekiel introduces into his description of the mean origin and miserable condition of God's ancient people, under the cruel oppression of Pharaoh :—'Thus saith the Lord God unto Jerusalem, Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan ; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite. And as for thy nativity in the day thou wast born, thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee ; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee ; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born.'† The founders of the Jewish people sojourned in the land of Canaan, where the Amorites and the Hittites bore the principal sway, without power or inheritance, or possession of any kind, except a burial place, often in fear of their jealous neighbours, and compelled to wander from one nation to another. Driven by famine from that country, they took refuge in Egypt, the open field in which they were cast. There the government, envying their prosperity, and fearing the rapid increase of their numbers, withdrew their favour and protection, reduced them to slavery, ruled over them with rigour, embittered their lives with intolerable oppression, and meditated nothing less than their utter extermination. Their male children were ordered to be strangled in the birth ; and it is not unlikely that many were, like Moses, exposed in the open field. That devoted people had no protector, none to interest themselves in their affairs, none to pity their extreme wretchedness. No care was taken of their infant state, to preserve and nurse it ; but every art was employed which a barbarous policy could dictate, to destroy it in the very beginning of its career. The new born infant, naked,

* Potter's Grecian Antiq. vol. ii. pp. 325, 326.

† Ezek. xvi. 3-5.

polluted, and destitute, is not in greater peril when exposed in the open field, than was the chosen seed in the land of Egypt :—' And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, live.'

Barrenness is still reckoned a disgrace in the East, and male children are desired beyond all other blessings, even by the lowest orders.* It is well known how strikingly this feeling characterized the Jewish women ; but in them it was probably not a merely natural sentiment, but combined with religious hopes, which taught them to look for the birth of a child, in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed. [It is difficult to convey to the mind of a European an idea of the lively sensations of joy or grief which are experienced by people of the East on the birth of their children, according as these prove to be male or female. With us the style of manners, or rather the salutary influence of the christian faith, has placed both sexes on an equal footing in society ; and, accordingly, except in some few instances, where the inheritance of property, or other circumstances, makes the birth of a son an object of desire and a matter of importance, parents receive with equal thankfulness, and are ready to provide for the wants of, and bestow undistinguishing marks of affection on, their progeny of either description. But it is far different in the East, where, from the influence, in some places, of a cruel and debasing superstition, in others, of licentious customs, the one class is the lord and tyrant of the other ; the one has honour and dignity written on their forehead, while that of the other is branded with the indelible stigma of degradation ; the one composes all the society that is known, while the other is either strangled as soon as born, or is shut up an exile for life, the slave of her master's will and his pleasures. The difference in the

* Malcolm's History of Persia, vol. ii. p. 520. Lady M. W. Montague's Letters, vol. i. pp. 238, 239.

respective destinies of the sexes has interwoven itself with the opinions and feelings of the natives, and whether it be from prejudice, associating whatever is honourable with the name of man, or from the secret impulses of nature, shrinking from the prospect of adding one more to a race of whom servitude is the hereditary portion, the birth of a son is universally hailed with unbounded demonstrations of delight, whereas, that of a daughter, like an unsupportable calamity, seals up the lips in the silence of grief. Among the Mussulmans of India,' says Mrs Meer, 'the birth of a boy is greeted by the warmest ebullitions of unaffected joy in the houses both of the parents and their relations. It is immediately announced by a discharge of artillery, where cannons are kept, or by musketry in the lower grades of the native population, even to the meanest peasant, with whom a single matchlock proclaims the honour as effectually as the volley of his superiors.'* Among the Arabs a similar custom obtains, for in whatever house a son is born, one of the domestics, after announcing it hastily to the family, runs to the door, which she beats with all her might to attract notice, exclaiming, all the while, a male-child! a male-child! a male-child is born! † The Persians, too, who participate in the notions of their Eastern neighbours, observe the greatest ceremony in announcing such an event to the father. 'Some confidential servant,' says Morier, 'is usually the first to get the information, when he runs in great haste to his master, and says, Mujdeh, or good news, by which he secures to himself a gift, which generally follows the intelligence. Among the common people the man who brings the news frequently seizes the cap or shawl of the father as a security for the reward, to which he holds himself entitled.'‡

[The very reverse of all this, however, takes place on the birth of a daughter. 'There are no expressions of

* Mrs Meer, vol. ii. p. 23. † Shaw. ‡ Morier's Sec. Journey.

joy; the servants, and other members of the household, meet and pass each other with downcast looks, and in profound silence; and, instead of any showing eagerness to communicate the tidings to the father, every one strives to avoid his presence, and keep out of his way.' In the land of Cutch and Cattawar, when a person asks a father whether his wife has had a son or a daughter, if the latter, he answers 'nothing;' and this expression, in the idiom of that country, is horribly significant. 'In every part of the East,' says Mr Ward, 'a female is despised as soon as she is born; she comes into the world amidst the frowns of her parents and friends, disappointed that the child is not a boy. Every mother, among the tribe of Rajpoots, puts her female child to death the moment it is born. While I was in Bengal, I was informed of the case of a Rajpoot, who had spared one of his daughters, and she lived till she attained the age when Indian girls are marriageable. A girl in the house of a Rajpoot was, however, so extraordinary a circumstance, that no parent chose to permit his son to marry her. The father then became alarmed for the honour of his family, and he therefore took her aside one day, and with a hatchet cut her to pieces.' In the Sandwich Islands, according to the testimony of Mr Ellis, it was customary to spare the life of a female child; but from the moment of its birth, it was doomed to feel its humiliating and degraded condition. It was not allowed to be fed with a particle of food from the father's dish, or that had been cooked at the father's fire. Whereas a boy, whose birth had given his family importance in the eyes of society, was from his earliest years admitted to partake of his father's food, and eat his meals with him, and was daily loaded with a thousand caresses.

[To such views and feelings, in regard to the condition of the sexes, which in all ages have obtained among eastern people, the sacred writers evidently allude in the two passages referred to in the note below;

and from the examples we have adduced from the works of those conversant with oriental life, the reader will perceive the propriety of particularizing 'a man child,' as well as be prepared to picture to himself that scene of bustle and elastic joy which, at the moment of writing these verses, was present to the minds of Job and the prophet. Both passages, particularly that of Job, are characterized by a strain of exalted poetry, and abound with such figures as an oriental imagination delights to employ. On the absurdity and profaneness, however, which both of these discover in cursing 'the day on which they were born,'—a day which was in no respect the cause of their sufferings, it is not our purpose to dwell. The imprecations they utter, display the tempest of deeply afflicted and disordered minds; and prove into what depths of sin men of the greatest piety may fall through the force of temptation. But it may be important to remark, that in the language of both, there seems to be an allusion to the ancient custom of marking every day of the year with white or black in their private registers, according as they had been fortunate or unfortunate, happy or adverse. On the return of those days, which in the calendar were black, the persons whose experience was thus recorded denied themselves to every kind of mirth and pleasure, filled their house with notes of lamentation and lugubrious dirges, and in counting up their life, used not to mention them, but to omit these in their reckoning as days of bad omen. When we consider the sacred regularity with which eastern people have in all ages observed the anniversary of their birth, and the splendid preparations with which persons in the rank of Job were wont to celebrate its periodical return, we shall be able to appreciate the impassioned energy of his language, and the wild disorder of his feelings, when he could wish that such a day should be cursed, and should perish.*]

* 'Let the day perish, wherein I was born, and the night in which

'It has been a common practice, in almost every country, to distinguish a person from others of the same name, by giving him a surname derived from the trade or occupation of his parent. The English language furnishes us with examples of this in the surnames of Baker, Taylor, Carpenter, and the like; and what is still more to the point, it is at this day the custom in some of the oriental nations, and particularly among the Arabs, to distinguish any learned and illustrious man that may chance to be born of parents who follow a particular trade or art, by giving him the name of such trade or art as a surname, although he may never have followed it himself. Thus, if a man of learning happen to be descended from a dyer or a tailor, they call him the tailor's son or the dyer's son, or frequently omitting the word son, simply the dyer or the taylor. According to this custom, the remark of the Jews, in which our Saviour is termed the carpenter, may be considered as referring merely to the occupation of his reputed father; and that τεκτων ought to be under-

it was said, there is a man-child conceived.'—Job iii. 3. 'Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, a man-child is born unto thee, making him very glad.'—Jeremiah xx. 15. The desire for children, especially sons, being so great, proud and ambitious persons, to whom that blessing was denied, have not unfrequently resorted to other methods of perpetuating their fame and memory, particularly the erection of monumental pillars to their own honour. Thus 'Absalom, in his lifetime, had taken and reared to himself a *pillar*, which is in the king's dale (valley of Jehoshaphet), for he said *I have no son* to keep my name in remembrance, and he called the pillar after his own name, and it is called unto this day Absalom's Place;' 2 Sam. xviii. 18. It is elsewhere said, indeed, that Absalom had three sons, and a daughter of great beauty called Tamar, 2 Sam. xiv. 27; but this pillar was in all likelihood raised previously to the appearance of this family, for Josephus expressly asserts that it was erected with the view of keeping alive his memory, *even* if he should have no children, Josephus' Antiq. vii. 9. 'The same method of perpetuating pride, and conveying a name to posterity, has been resorted to,' says Mr Monro, 'in Europe in much later times, as we see in the Asinelli and other towns of Bologna, besides divers others that might be mentioned in the northern part of Italy.'—*Vere Monro*, vol. i. p. 193.—*Editor.*

stood in this place,* as meaning nothing more than ὁ του τεκτονος υἱος, the son of the carpenter. This explanation of the term is supported by the authority of another evangelist,† who resolves it by this very phrase.‡

[The name of a child was frequently suggested by some remarkable incident attending his birth, or early years (as for instance, that of Moses), or were descriptive of the feelings and condition of the mother, of which Leah, Rachel, and Hannah, afford examples; or finally were intended to signify the purposes to which his future life should be devoted, as those of Samuel and Jesus. Nor was this custom of naming children from circumstances peculiar to the Jews. It has always prevailed very generally in the East, and hence Burckhardt and others inform us, that, among the Arabs, a name is given to the infant immediately on his birth. The name is derived from some trifling accident, or from some object which has struck the fancy of the mother, or any of the women present at the child's birth. Sometimes a name is changed several times in the course of a lifetime; but this alteration is made only upon some great crisis in the history of the individual—his succession to a large property, or the adoption of a new form of religion; and consists generally in the addition of a syllable, or the change of a few letters. Hence, in conformity with this custom, the names of Abram and Sarai were changed to indicate the bright prospects of a numerous progeny, of which they were destined to be the founders; and hence also the names of Simon and of Saul were dropped for others on their conversion to the faith of Christ. In later times, however, the Jews universally adopted the practice of giving their children names after some of their esteemed relatives; for, when Zacharias insisted on his son being called John, the company of friends who

* Mark vi. 3. † Matthew xiii. 55.
‡ Mosheim's Commentaries &c. vol. i. pp. 111, 112.

were assembled in honour of the occasion, expressed their astonishment at the introduction of a name, which had never been borne by any member of their family. A wife, whatever was her own name previously, is, from the moment of the birth of a child, spoken of in her immediate circle of friends and acquaintances as the mother of such a one. The honour of having offspring is so highly prized in the East, that the people seem anxious, as it were, not to let it be forgotten; and accordingly, where there are several children, she takes the name of the eldest. Where there is one more distinguished than the rest, she is familiarly known as his mother. Thus a recent traveller, in describing a Syrian family with which he became acquainted, informs us that the mistress went by the name of Om Yousuf—the mother of Joseph, the hope of the house; and, in the Arabian Nights, a man is described as the father of Mary—his family consisting entirely of daughters—and that being the name of the eldest. The same designation was evidently in use among the Jews, for she who in early life was called Mary, was, at the marriage of Cana, when her distinguished son performed his first miracle, described as 'the mother of Jesus.']

The child, as soon as it is born, is committed to the care of a nurse; if it be a boy, the father appoints a steady man, from the age of two years, to be his keeper; and such it may be supposed were the persons who brought up Ahab's sons.* But if it be a female, it is entrusted to the care of a female nurse, who is commonly attached to it for life. When Rebecca left her father's house, on being betrothed to Isaac, we read that she was accompanied by her nurse, who never left her till the day of her death; an event which is not deemed unworthy of being recorded by the pen of inspiration: 'Here Deborah, Rebecca's nurse, died.'†

* 2 Kings x. 1. Morier's Travels, vol. i. p. 104, &c.

† Forbes' Oriental Memoirs, vol. iii. p. 141.

This is a clear proof that nurses were sometimes held in great estimation.

On the day when the child is to be weaned, the orientals give an entertainment to their friends and relations; a custom which may be traced to a very remote antiquity; for 'Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned.' *

Second marriages, during the life of the first wife, are greatly opposed by ladies of superior rank; whose powerful relations, considering such a step as an insult both to herself and her family, seize the first opportunity of revenge. How forcibly this illustrates what Laban said to Jacob, when he made an agreement with him on mount Gilead:—'If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives beside my daughters, *no* man being with us (to avenge our insulted honour), see, God is witness betwixt me and thee.' †

It is a custom, in many parts of the East, to carry their children astride upon the hip, with the arm round the body. ‡ In the kingdom of Algiers, when the slaves take the children out, the boys ride upon their shoulders; § and in a religious procession, which Symes had an opportunity of seeing at Ava, the capital of the Burman empire, the first personages of rank that passed by, were three children borne astride on men's shoulders. ‖ It is evident from these facts, that the oriental children are carried sometimes the one way, sometimes the other. Nor was the custom in reality different in Judea, though the prophet expresses himself in these terms:—'They shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders;' ¶ for, according to Dr

* Gen. xxi. 8. Morier's Travels, vol i. p. 107.
† Gen. xxxi 50. Morier's Travels, vol. i. p. 58.
‡ Harmer's Observations, vol. iv. p. 294, note.
§ Pitt's Travels, p. 68. ‖ Syme's History of Ava, p. 169.
¶ Isaiah xlix. 22.

Russel, the children able to support themselves, are usually carried astride on the shoulder; but in infancy they are carried in the arms, or awkwardly on one haunch.* Dandini tells us, that on horseback the Asiatics 'carry their young children upon their shoulders with great dexterity. These children hold by the head of him who carries them, whether he be on horseback or on foot, and do not hinder him from walking, nor doing what he pleases.'† 'This augments the import of the passage in Isaiah, who speaks of the Gentiles bringing children thus; so that distance is no objection to this mode of conveyance, since they may thus be brought on horseback from 'among the people' however remote.'‡

In Persia, a son never sits in the presence of his father or his mother; even the king's son always stands before him; and is regarded only as the first of his servants.§ This is the reason that Rachel addressed her father in these words:—'Let it not displease my lord, that I cannot rise up before thee.'‖

Illegitimacy was reputed a dishonour in ancient Greece, from the time her infant states began to submit to the control of laws and regular government. A bastard among the Greeks was even despised and exposed to public scorn, on account of his spurious origin; for Ion, the son of Apollo by Creusa, the wife of an Athenian king, is introduced by Euripides, complaining of his hard fortune in being illegitimate:—

> 'Then where shall wretched I intrude myself,
> Who am on two accounts most desperate—
> A bastard son, and of a stranger too?
> And to complete my most opprobrious fate,
> Am most infirm: on these accounts shall I
> Be there despised, and made a public scorn.'¶

In Persia the son of a concubine is never placed on a footing with their legitimate offspring; any attempt

* History of Aleppo, vol. p. 441. † Voy. au Mont. lib. 72.
‡ Calmet, vol. iii. § Morier's Travels, vol. i. p. 286.
‖ Morier's Travels, p. 134. Gen. xxxi. 35.
¶ Potter's Grecian Antiq. vol. ii. p. 338.

made by parental fondness to do so would be resented by the relations of the legitimate wives, and outrage the feelings of a whole tribe.*

The Jewish father seems to have bestowed as little attention on the education of his natural children as the Greek: he seems to have resigned them, in a great measure, to their own inclinations; he neither checked their passions, nor corrected their faults, nor stored their minds with useful knowledge. This is evidently implied in these words of the apostle:—'If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.'†

To restrain the licentious desires of the heart, Jehovah by an express law, fixed a stigma upon the bastard, which was not to be removed till the tenth generation; and to show that the precept was on no account to be violated, or suffered to fall into disuse, it is immediately repeated, 'A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the Lord.'‡

Persons who had no lawful issue, were allowed to adopt whom they pleased, whether their own natural sons, or (by consent of their parents) the sons of other men. At Athens, foreigners being excluded from the inheritance of estates within their territory, upon their adoption, were made free of the city. The adopted person had his name enrolled in the tribe and ward of his new father; he was invested with all the privileges and rights of a legitimate son, and obliged to perform all the duties belonging to the latter. Being thus provided for in another family, he ceased to have any claim of inheritance or kindred in the family which he had left, unless he first renounced his adoption.

* Malcolm's History of Persia, vol. ii. p. 571.

† Heb. xii. 7, 8. ‡ Deut. xxiii. 2.

This custom the Greeks borrowed from the eastern nations, or perhaps brought it with them from Asia, when they first crossed the Hellespont, and settled in Europe.* Pharaoh's daughter adopted Moses for her son; and Mordecai received Esther into his house, and acknowledged her as his own daughter.† To this ancient custom the Spirit of God sometimes alludes in the Sacred Scriptures; and borrows the name by which it was distinguished, to intimate the high station and valuable privileges which the sinner attains in the day of conversion. The Father of mercies adopts his children, when he graciously admits strangers and foreigners, as all the descendants of Adam are become, into the state and relation of sons, through Jesus Christ, in whom they believe, upon whose blood and righteousness they rely for pardon and acceptance; 'for to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name.' 'They are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.' They are regenerated by the power of the Holy Ghost, and are brought, through his powerful and saving influences, into an affectionate and submissive temper of mind towards God as their reconciled Father. They have a right to all the privileges of sons; they are made partakers of a divine nature; nourished with the sincere milk of the Word; kept by his almighty power; guarded by his ministering angels; clothed with the garments of salvation, and adorned with the robe of righteousness. He gives them an understanding to know the gospel, and makes them

* Potter's Grecian Antiq. vol. ii. p. 342.

† Rich people in the East who have no sons, sometimes adopt a favourite slave, and marry him to a daughter, or other female of the family, in consequence of which alliance, he becomes heir to the property. An example of this occurs in sacred history. Sheshan had no sons, but daughters, and Sheshan had a servant, an Egyptian, whose name was Jarha, and Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha his servant to wife; 1 Chron. xi. 34, 35].—*Editor.*

wise unto salvation; he visits their sins with stripes, and their iniquities with chastisements; he admits them to fellowship with himself, and with his son Jesus Christ: he makes all things work together for their good; he guides them with his counsel while they live, and afterwards receives them to glory.

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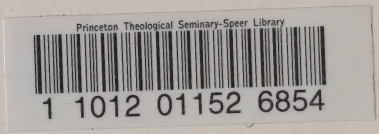
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